THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN * BRILL

'On the Beliefs of the Greeks'

Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy

Karen Hartnup

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΕΜΥΚΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΠΕΡΙΛΑΤΟΥΝ
HELLADIS ILLUSTRANS FOLIIS ALLATIUS ORBEM
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Ob eruditæ monumenta Lucius Camporus Pat: STD.

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‘ON THE BELIEFS OF THE GREEKS’

Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy

BY

KAREN HARTNUP

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To Roy

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ABBREVIATIONS

De consens.	Allatios, Leo, *De ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis, perpetua consensione* (Cologne [Amsterdam], 1648, facsmile reprint, Farnborough, 1970).
De opin.	——, *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus* (Cologne [Amsterdam?], (1645).
De purg.	——, *De utriusque ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua in dogmate de Purgatorio consensione* (Rome, 1655).
PG	Migne, J.P. (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca* (Paris, 1857–91).
PL	——, (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina* (Paris, 1844–91).

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΕΜΨΥΧΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ ΠΕΡΙΠΛΑΤΟΥΝ
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ELOQUII PAR EST, ROMA, NITORE TUI.
Ob servantiæ monumento Lucius Camporus Pat. S.T.D.

Fig. 1: Leo Allatios (1586–1669)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Leo Allatios was one of the most prolific scholars of the seventeenth century and his career took in many of the most important intellectual movements of the period. He was a passionate antiquarian and moved in humanist circles. He was theologically trained and advised various Vatican Congregations, including the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, through which he met ecclesiastical scholars such as Jacques Goar and Jean Morin.[1] His medical training brought him into contact with some of the most important men of science and doctors of the age including Galileo Galilei. It was in a medical context too that his *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus* (1645) (henceforth *De opinationibus*) was composed in the form of a letter addressed to the acclaimed papal doctor, Paolo Zacchias. Despite his importance, there have been very few works dedicated to Allatios' writings, perhaps because he was not the most original scholar of his time. Nevertheless, his contribution should not be underestimated: standing at the centre of ecclesiastical, humanistic and medical circles, he provides a unique insight into the interaction of these fields.[2]

Born in Chios around 1586, Allatios was sent to Rome to study at the Greek College. His father was of the Orthodox faith but while at school Allatios made a private profession of Catholicism and remained true to it for the rest of his life. He never forgot the Orthodox church, however, and his most famous work, the massive *De ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione* of 1648 (henceforth *De consensione*), emphasises the historical connection between the two oldest branches of Christianity. The ecumenical theme of the *De consensione* is also apparent in the *De opinationibus*, in which Allatios focuses not on the rites and rituals of the Orthodox church that

[1] Philip P. Argenti, *The Religious Minorities of Chios; Jews and Roman Catholics* (London, 1970), p. 258.

[2] Thomas Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci 1587–1669. The Fortunes of an Early Byzantinist', Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1986, p. 152 n. 66.

were the subject of so many of his other works, but on the beliefs and practices of those he calls the 'common people'. The contents of the *De opinationibus* consist of an amalgamation of sources from different periods that Allatios had collected while working as a scriptor in the Vatican Library. Most of the phenomena the text discusses relate to the *exotika*, the demonic creatures which were believed to live on the margins of the physical world, dwelling in hills, forests, mountains and seas; and on the margins of earthly experience where they inhabit graves. Among these *exotika* are the child-stealing demon or *gello*, the revenant or *vrykolakas*, goblin-like creatures called *kallikantzaroi*, and the beautiful *nereides*.[3] To the evidence from his written sources, Allatios adds accounts of his own experiences, and the disparate material is tied together with his commentary. On the strength of this work, Allatios has been called "the most important of the seventeenth-century writers on Greek customs and traditions".[4]

Unsurprisingly, the *De opinationibus* has already been mined by historians and anthropologists, but despite Allatios' considerable influence, or perhaps because of it, the letter has never been thoroughly investigated, nor have the beliefs and practices he describes been fully explained.[5] Earlier treatments merely recounted the details of Allatios' text without analysing the material in its historical context.[6] Authors

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[3] On the *exotika*, especially in modern Greece, see Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton, 1991).

[4] Montague Summers, *The Vampire in Europe* (New Hyde Park, New York, [1962]), p. 223.

[5] For older writers who make use of Allatios see Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (London, 1679), p. 271 ff.; Thomas Smith, *An Account of the Greek Church as to its Doctrine and Rites of Worship: with Several Historical Remarks Interspersed Relating thereunto* (London, 1680), pp. 183–87. For modern authors see for example, Philip P. Argenti and H.J.R. Rose, *The Folklore of Chios* (Cambridge, 1949), vol. 1, p. 7; John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: a Study in Survivals* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 364; Summers, *Europe*, p. 228; Stewart, *Demons*, p. 268 n. 16.

[6] See for example the attempts of various authors to deal with the contradiction inherent in Allatios' accounts of the *vrykolakas* or revenant, in which the devil possesses a body and prevents it from decaying. The church first attempts to deny the corporeal existence of the creature but then provides a means to get rid of the remains. (Leo Allatios, *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus* (Cologne [Amsterdam?], 1645), XII, pp. 144–45.) Summers, *Europe*, pp. 224–25 ignores the issue completely; Argenti, *Folklore*, vol. 1, p. 17 suggests that the church was undecided over the issue but does not resolve how the church could, on the one hand, claim the undecayed body was an illusion, and, on the other, provide the means to dispose of it; Lawson, *Folklore*, p. 366 has a more sophisticated approach to the problem, but views the whole issue in terms of survivals from ancient Greece.

have assumed that Allatios had a deep knowledge of the practices outlined in the text, ignoring the influence of his antiquarian training and methods and the fact that as an adult he only spent a very brief time in the land of his birth. On the grounds that he was born in Chios, more than one author has taken it for granted that the *De opinationibus* relates particularly to this island, overlooking the archival origin of most of Allatios' sources.[7] Nor has there been any attempt to evaluate Allatios' approach to his sources and his viewpoint has often been taken at face value by researchers. Authors assumed that Allatios, as a Greek, looked on these beliefs and practices as an insider; that he knew and understood the ways of the Orthodox church, popular and official; that as an insider he could relate the accounts of the 'common people' of Greece to a western Catholic audience without distortion. They maintained this view despite the fact that Allatios left Chios at the age of nine, and returned only once, by which time he had converted to Catholicism and immersed himself in the dynamic and varied intellectual life of Catholic Reformation Rome. Therefore Allatios' attitudes to Orthodox popular religion are likely to be complex and they cannot be appreciated in a piecemeal approach.

The absence of a critical work dealing with *De opinationibus* in its entirety is consistent with the wider neglect of Orthodox popular religion in the early modern period. In 1978 in his seminal study *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Peter Burke noted the lack of research into popular culture in Orthodox Europe and the same remains true today, particularly for those areas which came under Ottoman rule.[8] The aim here is to investigate the *De opinationibus*,

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[7] Argenti, *Folklore*, vol. 1, p. 7: "Allacci was himself a Chian and therefore, unless the contrary is indicated, it is usually safe to suppose that when he speaks of Greek customs he at least includes his fellow-islanders". See also Summers, *Europe*, p. 276 n. 28: "Allacci was born on Chios in 1586 and his observations were chiefly made on, as his information is generally derived from, his native island." On the strength of Argenti's assumption, Richard Greenfield remarks that an exorcism contained in Allatios' text possibly originated in Chios. See Richard P.H. Greenfield, 'St Sisinnios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon *Gylou*: the Typology of the Greek Literary Stories', *Byzantina* 15 (1989), 93 n. 16.

[8] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1996), p. 214 n. 17. See also Margaret Alexiou, 'Folklore: an Obituary?', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9–10 (1984/5–6), 5. It is also consistent with the marginalisation of the Ottoman state by the West: Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), ch. 1.

one of the most important and influential works on Orthodox popular religion, and to offer a multi-layered or 'thick' description of its contents.[9] This approach calls for a thorough examination of Allatios' work as a whole in its historical context, an evaluation of his interpretation of his sources, and a detailed exploration of the individual beliefs and practices he discusses. The influence of his western intellectual training and Catholicism on his commentary must be considered and set in the context of the wider relationship between Catholicism and Orthodoxy during the seventeenth century. By evaluating the *De opinationibus*, this book will open up Allatios' work to a wider audience and facilitate further research into this much neglected field.

Approaching Orthodox Popular Religion

An analysis of the *De opinationibus* is not exempt from the usual problems encountered in the study of what has been termed 'popular religion'. How should popular religion be understood? To whom do popular beliefs belong? The very term 'popular religion' is problematic. It sets up an opposition between 'popular' and 'non popular' religion, generating the problem not only of describing the nature of popular religion, but also of defining what is left over once the popular aspects have been marked off. In the past historians understood 'popular' religion to comprise those beliefs and practices which deviated from the 'non popular' Christianity promulgated by the central church. 'Popular' practices were therefore suspect, and were often characterised as superstitious or even pagan. 'Popular' religion was also identified as the religion of particular social groupings. In what is known as the two-tier model, 'popular' religion is associated with the peasantry, the laity, and the illiterate, and is opposed to the 'non popular' religion of the elite, the clergy and the literate respectively. However, it is clear from many studies that religious experience cannot be divided along such lines.[10] The clergy were not

[9] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London, 1993), pp. 5–10.

[10] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion' in Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *In Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, Papers from the University of Michigan

always drawn from the elite, particularly in the case of seventeenth-century Orthodoxy, and neither the elite nor the clergy were necessarily literate. Orthodox popular religion, like western popular religion, cannot be viewed as the property of a particular group. The simple two-tier model cannot do justice to the complexity of the situation.[11] Moreover, it is counterproductive to approach the material in this way. The majority of sources on popular religion are documents, which of course implies the authors were literate, and were often written by the clergy or social elite. If, as the two-tier model suggests, there was a strict division of experience into two spheres, with little overlap between them, the sources could not provide any information on popular religion itself, as opposed to the clerical, elite, or literate interpretation of popular beliefs. Therefore any division of religious experience along these lines would reduce the value of the sources for an investigation into popular religion.[12]

Such a division would imply that Leo Allatios, as a member of the educated, ecclesiastical elite could not reflect popular religious experience in any meaningful way. Admittedly, at first sight Allatios' own approach to the material does suggest the existence of this division. The title of his work describes popular practices as '*opinationes*'. The word is difficult to render into English; a direct translation is 'opinions' but during the early modern period '*opinationes*' often had negative connotations, coming to mean something akin to 'superstitions', and therefore it refers slightingly to the beliefs and practices it describes. Allatios states that these '*opinationes*' were held by 'common people', and on the whole were 'mad', 'stupid' or 'laughable',

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Conference [held on April 20–22, 1972] (Leiden, 1974), pp. 309–10. On the medieval period see Aaron Gurevitch, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. Janos M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, (Cambridge, 1990), pp. xviii ff.

[11] On the failure of the rigid division of popular and elite in western studies see Trevor Johnson, 'Blood, Tears and Xavier-Water: Jesuit Missionaries and Popular Religion in the Eighteenth-Century Upper Palatinate' in Bob Scribner and Trevor Johnson (eds.), *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400–1800* (London, 1996), pp. 183–202, where he argues that the relationship between the Jesuits and the people of the Upper Palatinate reveals that they shared the same miraculous world view. See also the more theoretical study of Bob Scribner, 'Is a History of Popular Culture Possible?', *History of European Ideas* 10 (1989), 175–91 esp. 175; Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. 28.

[12] Scribner, 'History', 177 argues that this method separates off popular religion to such an extent that it makes it difficult to see how the elite could have information on popular practices.

and that the people were credulous.[13] He distanced himself from their viewpoint and often assigned their beliefs and practices to particular social groups with which he did not identify.

However, the way the beliefs are described by Allatios and his sources does not conform to the Orthodox experience of religion. He adhered to the outlook of his sources and in many ways the tag 'religion of the common people' represents a value judgement made by a hierarchical society to stigmatise certain beliefs and practices, rather than an accurate designation of the constituency of believers.[14] All sections of Orthodox society were involved in popular beliefs and practices to a greater or lesser extent. Rich and poor alike were fearful of the child-stealing demon; both educated and illiterate used holy objects in their healing practices; the clergy as well as the laity could be involved in burning the *vrykolakas*, despite the fact it was forbidden by the church. Even Allatios at times accepts popular practices and the existence of popular demons. The same approach is apparent during the Byzantine period, when "belief in magic and sorcery was not a phenomenon confined to some sort of 'folk religion' which found its followers only or even chiefly in the uneducated and lower strata of Byzantine society."[15] Therefore the

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[13] These comments occur throughout the text. See for example Allatios, *De opin.*, VII, p. 126, XV, p. 151, XXI, p. 163; XXVII, p. 157 etc.

[14] The eleventh-century philosopher Michael Psellos refers to the beliefs of 'the masses' (D.J. O'Meara, (ed.), *Michaeli Pselli. Philosophica Minora*, (Leipzig, 1989), vol. 2, p. 163); the dictionary *Suidas* refers to the understandings of 'the common people' and opposes this to that of doctors (*Suidae Lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler (Leipzig, 1928) vol. 2, p. 486, no. 3909); Balsamon, the twelfth-century canonist used the expression 'foolish old women' to describe those who believed in practices the church proscribed (Marie Theres Fögen, 'Balsamon on Magic: from Roman Secular Law to Byzantine Canon Law' in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic* (Washington D.C., 1995), p. 107); the fourteenth-century historian Pachymeres refers to 'the customs of the common people' and implicitly opposed them to the practices of the imperial family but, interestingly also to the wise advice of the midwife who saved the life of Andronikos II's daughter. Her advice, he says, was over and above that of the common people. (George Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Paleologis*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn, 1835), vol. 2, 3: 32, pp. 276–77.)

[15] Richard P.H. Greenfield, 'Sorcery and Politics at the Byzantine Court in the Twelfth Century' in R. Beaton and C. Roueché (eds.), *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald Nicol*, (Aldershot, 1993), p. 79. An analysis of fourteenth-century cases which were brought by the church against sorcerers also supports this conclusion. See for example F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana* (Aalen, 1860), vol. 1, p. 543. For a discussion of these cases see Carolina Cupane, 'La magia a Bisanzio nel secolo XIV: azione e reazione', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980), 237–62.

two-tier model is not a suitable one because the identification of 'popular religion' with particular social groups is not supported by the source material. Equally seriously, a rigid separation of the religious experiences of popular and elite would make impossible any transmission of popular religion by the learned Leo Allatios. Consequently, it is not appropriate to use the two-tier model in a study of Orthodox popular religion and Allatios' work in particular.

Another unsatisfactory approach frequently employed in the study of popular religion rests on the assumption that popular beliefs and practices are unchanging and consequently that they preserve rituals, attitudes and even cosmologies from the past. In studies of Greece this assumption has encouraged scholars to use contemporary beliefs and practices to inquire into the customs of a distant past. Folklorists from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries setting out to investigate the archaic and classical periods of Greece often approached the past through the customs of their own time and, more rarely, customs from the medieval period. The use of evidence in this way has been termed 'survivalism'. It has a long pedigree, partly because the western world has been far more familiar with and interested in 'the glories of ancient Greece' than in the realities of life for the Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire. For example, at the start of the twentieth century, John Cuthbert Lawson used the *De opinationibus* amongst other texts to help him trace connections between the customs of contemporary Greece and ancient Greek myth.[16] His *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* is immensely learned, and his treatment of beliefs and practices in this work is often sensitive and perceptive, but the title of his work indicates his underlying concern. He argued that although Christianity altered the ethical standards and imposed a religiously sanctioned morality on ancient Greece, practically all ancient religious customs continued up to his own day. Christianity was merely grafted on to paganism and the conciliatory practices of the early church meant that the Christianity of the masses became polytheistic. Lawson concluded that the inhabitants of modern Greece "with all this external Christianity . . . are as pagan and as polytheistic in their hearts as were ever their

[16] Lawson, *Folklore*, p. 362 ff. uses Allatios' accounts of the *vrykolakas* to investigate "the fundamental ideas held by the Greek people from the beginning concerning the relations between soul and body".

ancestors."[17] In fact, for him modern Greek Christianity was just a thin cover for the continuing system of paganism.

Although Lawson's work follows the prevailing methodology of his time, it typifies the archaeological and romantic folkloric approach to Greek popular religion, which until recently held sway in Greek studies.[18] In such studies the aim was to strip away the modern 'accretions' in order to extract information on the classical period and to reveal a 'pristine Hellenic past'.[19] No attempt was made to trace the practices through the intervening periods and the impact of such momentous events as the conversion to Christianity, the conquest of Constantinople, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire was ignored.[20] The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld and the folklorist Margaret Alexiou have highlighted the link between the ideology of survivalism and the creation of modern Greek national identity.[21] Popular culture has been used to produce a "living demonstration of the continuity of the Greek nation".[22] Thus the methodology creates an imagined past for the Greek people, projecting their identity as a self-consciously separate 'proto-nation' back into the Ottoman past.[23] Survivalism is more concerned with establishing links between

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[17] Ibid., p. 47.

[18] See too the work of Richard Blum and Eva Blum, *The Dangerous Hour: the Lore of Crisis and Mystery in Rural Greece* (London, 1970) and Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (Philadelphia, 1972). For a critique of their approach see Loring M. Danforth, 'The Ideological Context of the Search for Continuities in Greek Culture', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1984), 59–68; Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 'Introduction to Modern Greek Ideology and Folklore', *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 3 (1986), 41–43. The article traces the changing relationship between the creation of Greek national identity and approaches to folklore between 1770–1940.

[19] Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 'Introduction', 43. See Margaret Alexiou, 'Modern Greek Folklore and its Relation to the Past: the Evolution of Charos in Greek Tradition' in S. Vryonis (ed.), *The 'Past' in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture* (Malibu, California, 1978), p. 224 where she rejects Lawson's assumption (*Folklore*, pp. 98–117) that it is possible to arrive at the pristine beliefs of the ancients.

[20] Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 'Introduction', 41; Danforth, 'Ideological Context', 58: "the simple existence of similarities, parallels, or analogies alone is not enough to demonstrate continuity." Not all folklore studies approach the material in terms of survivals. Cf. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974) and Alexiou, 'Charos'.

[21] Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin, Texas, 1982); see also Alexiou, 'Folklore', 3; 7–8; Danforth, 'Ideological Context', 66–67.

[22] Alexiou, 'Folklore', 8.

[23] Goffman, *Ottoman Empire*, p. 29. For the general theory see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).

past and present than investigating the past for its own sake. In fact the methodology works to obliterate traces of the Ottoman period and makes it impossible to take account of the fact that the Ottoman Empire was a multicultural society where, in many areas, Orthodox, Muslims, Jews and westerners interacted on a daily basis and where friendships, marriages and business deals cut across religious lines and facilitated the exchange of ideas and practices.[24] Survivalism, like the 'two-tier' model is not an appropriate method for an examination of Allatios and his *De opinationibus*.

An anthropological approach is more promising. For Clifford Geertz, religion is a cultural phenomenon, a shared system of meanings and values.[25] He analyses beliefs and practices in the context in which they appear, focusing his attention on how they work in society and their meaning for the individuals who subscribe to them.[26] Unlike the two-tier model, Geertz's approach allows the observer to study people's beliefs on their own terms. 'Popular' and 'official' religion can be studied as part of the same belief system and religious experience is not divided up according to its conformity, or otherwise, to normative texts. Although details may vary within a single religious tradition, popular and official religion still share broadly the same cosmological structure.[27] For Geertz it is not necessary or even helpful to measure religious practice against prescriptive writings as it is recognised that practice and text are not comparable in a straightforward way. All practice of religion will diverge from the rubric laid down in prescriptive texts. Therefore the distinction made is not between 'popular' and 'non popular' religion, but between 'religion as practised' and 'religion as text'. Anthropologists can even avoid the dichotomy of text and practice by investigating people's beliefs

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[24] See Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: an Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 202. For an example of a business deal which reveals allegiances that extend beyond religious groups see Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642–1660* (London, 1998), pp. 49–51. Frederick W. Hasluck in his *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford, 1929), p. 1 is very hostile to survivalism, arguing that "a survival of religious tradition is so far from inevitable that it is only probable under favourable conditions. A violent social upheaval, such as a conquest by aliens, may possibly, and a change of population involving a wide area will probably, obliterate such traditions altogether."

[25] Geertz, *Interpretation*, p. 89.

[26] Clifford Geertz *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (New York, 1983), p. 44.

[27] Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 91 ff.; Stewart, *Demons*, p. 12.

directly, and not through the normative structure laid down by the official church. Thus, in his book *Islam Observed*, Geertz examines the experience of religion in two separate Islamic societies without reference to normative dogma or doctrine.[28]

However, this approach does not entirely solve the historian's problem. It does not allow for the contested nature of religion apparent in the source material. Unlike the anthropologist who works with living communities, historians are primarily dependent on information provided in texts for their understanding of religion. These sources were usually written by authors who did not share the viewpoint of their informants who often approached popular beliefs in terms of how far they conformed to the prescriptions of the central church. The divisions in the sources reflects a contemporary division in the viewpoints of individuals and groups and therefore the distinction between text and practice does not solve the problem of how to investigate 'popular' religion in historical sources.[29] While the divisions in the sources cannot be taken to reflect a rigid separation of religious experience, nor can they be ignored. Religion may be a shared system of meanings and values but not all groups or individuals within a culture approach religion in the same way. Despite the problems with 'popular religion', the term arises out of a need to recognise these variations in the experience of religion as much as a desire to rigidly confine the beliefs to a particular social group. Moreover, anthropologists also use the term 'popular' when similar conflicts over religious experience come to light.[30] Historians therefore need to be able to recognise variations in people's experience of religion without taking at face value the rigid divisions often suggested by the sources.

Too sharp a division between text and practice can also obscure the role played by normative texts in shaping people's understanding and experience of religion. Text and practice may not be directly

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[28] Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago, 1968); Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (Oxford, 1996), p. 262.

[29] Scribner, 'History', 184.

[30] Jill Dubisch, 'Pilgrimage and Popular Religion at a Greek Holy Shrine' in Ellen Badone (ed.), *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 113–36. For a similar reason Charles Stewart in his study of Naxos uses the approach developed by William Christian. In his *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1989), Christian replaces the popular/elite dichotomy with the opposition between local and central religion. See Stewart, *Demons*, p. 11.

comparable, but there is still an interaction between them. Normative texts develop in response to practice, and practice changes in response to normative texts. While normative texts might not represent the views of individual clergy, they do represent the 'ecclesiastical' or 'official church' viewpoint, that is, the perspective of the church as an institution. This also does not remain static, but changes through its interaction with the various manifestations of religious ideas and practices and in response to the historical context. Yet it also works within a framework of attitudes developed over time — what Richard Greenfield has identified as the 'inherited tradition' — which guide the principles of ecclesiastical action.

Taking these factors into account, historians of popular religion now view the culture of western society in the early modern period as an organic whole, containing overlapping groups and subgroups, with varying practices and viewpoints, each made up of 'the heterogenous responses of individuals'.[31] The formation of culture, and therefore religion as part of culture, is a dynamic process, which is affected by the interaction between the various groupings; the physical, political, social and economic environment and the inherited tradition of the church.[32] In this model, different social groupings are not isolated from each other, allowing the possibility of communication and cross-fertilisation between different experiences of religion.

Like other writers on popular beliefs and practices, Allatios mediated between different experiences of religion. A highly educated man, he participated in the intellectual tradition of the learned few, yet he reported on the customs and practices of the unlearned majority. In Robert Redfield's terms he mediated between the 'great' and the 'little' traditions.[33] Texts such as the *De opinationibus* are the product of the process of mediation, and their contents provide a meeting place for the two traditions. Bob Scribner has argued "if we can assume cultural mediation to work in two directions, we can study what is mediated to gain some valid access to what might be genuinely 'popular'."[34] That is, in order for texts like the *De opinationibus* to provide information on popular religion itself, rather than just

[31] Scribner, 'History', p. 181.
[32] Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. xxii.
[33] Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago, 1956), pp. 41–42.
[34] Scribner, 'History', p. 179.

official views of it, the author must have participated in both traditions. However, the different experiences of religion in which Allatios participates may not lie within a single 'great' tradition. Allatios stood on the boundary between the traditions of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. His text discusses popular Orthodox beliefs but as an adult he was more fully immersed in the developments and ideas arising in his intellectual circles in Catholic Reformation Rome than in Orthodox culture. It is to the nature of the mediation within Allatios' text that we now turn.

The Problems of Mediating between Traditions

Orthodoxy, Catholicism and even the reformed churches share the basics of the Christian faith. They all accept the Nicene Creed as a statement of the faith, albeit with a difference of opinion over the procession of holy spirit — the famous *filioque* clause. They also share in the same cosmological structure, where ultimately God is in control and mankind is stationed between heaven and hell, guided by saints (at least for Catholics and the Orthodox) and tempted by demons.[35] On the basis of these mutual beliefs it could be argued that Allatios' Catholicism should make no difference to his interpretation of Orthodox popular religion. However, the diverging historical development of Catholicism and Orthodoxy meant that by the early modern period the two churches differed in their approach to popular religion and to religion as a whole. The physical, political, social, and economic environments in which the centres of the two churches were situated were radically different and affected the respective interaction between the official churches and the people.[36] To highlight some of the issues that must be borne in mind when using Allatios' text to investigate Orthodox popular religion, a general outline of some of the major differences between the two churches is given below, in particular the developments which occurred as the result of the on-going process of Catholic renewal, which predated

[35] On the common Christian culture see Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 47–58.

[36] For a modern example of this see the triangular relationship between the church, state and faithful in the ecclesiastical attitude to the Anastenaria, the fire-walking rituals of northern Greece. Danforth, 'Ideological Context', 68–85.

the Council of Trent (1545–63). This is important in order to set Allatios' methodology against the background of assumptions and expectations regarding the relationship between the official church and the people which were current in Rome. However a comparison between the situations of the Orthodox and Catholic churches is also useful to orientate the reader. Western popular religion has often been studied in terms of the wide-ranging impact of these reforms on the relationship between official and popular religion. The same approach is not necessarily appropriate to the relationship between popular and official Orthodoxy.

As well as long-standing theological disagreements, there was a fundamental variation in outlook between the churches of East and West. Theology in the East, unlike the West, was apophatic: eastern divines did not believe that the human intellect could reveal further truths by extrapolating from the scriptures. God could not be comprehended by human logic.[37] Hence the Orthodox church did not hold clearly defined doctrinal positions on matters such as purgatory or transubstantiation. The difference in approach had contributed to the debates between the churches over these points at the Council of Florence/Ferrara (1438–45). In the wake of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations these theological divergences assumed an even greater importance as people's understanding of their faith began to change. At this time the meaning of the term '*religio*' shifted from having an experiential to an intellectual meaning. From being "an attribute of people and communities", referring to "a worshipful attitude to God or a respect for holy things", '*religio*' came to denote "objective social and moral entities characterised by system, principles and hard edges".[38] According to John Bossy,

[37] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 1983), p. 11.

[38] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985), p. 170. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: a New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (London, 1964), pp. 39–40. Compare however, Peter Biller in 'Words and the Medieval Notion of "Religion"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1995), 351–369 where he argues that some of the meanings associated with the early modern understanding of '*religio*' are supplied by other words during the central middle ages. For Cantwell Smith the change in the meaning of '*religio*' must be accompanied by a synchronous development in the meaning of the word 'belief' away from designating 'a loyal pledging of oneself to God' and 'an act of faith' to signifying "that mental act or state of which a proposition is the prescribed goal."

the rupture in the fabric of the faith caused by the Reformation and the Catholic reforms created an environment of embattled faiths, which forced people to view their own religion from the outside and to define themselves against the 'other'.[39] 'Religion' came to be viewed as a system characterised and distinguished by a particular body of beliefs. The disputes which followed the Reformation hardened and clarified the various religious positions of the Catholic and Protestant churches, providing a clear distinction between the different confessions. Allatios and his colleagues in Rome participated in this development: they wrote works which focused on the differences and similarities of the two churches and many of Allatios' compositions on the Orthodox church were written to aid the Catholic struggle against Protestantism.[40]

Orthodoxy of course did not go through a Reformation and it is unclear to what extent the Orthodox understanding of religion went through a similar change at this time. No comparable research has been carried out regarding the terms 'θρησκεία' (*threskeia*) 'religion, devotion, faith' or 'πίστη' (*piste*) 'faith, belief' but evidence suggests that religious identity was constructed in terms of what people did rather than the theological concepts to which they adhered. In the seventeenth century the devout Catholic French ambassador, the Marquis de Nointel, wishing to solve the burning issue of the Orthodox position on transubstantiation, collected signed testimonials containing statements of faith from members of the Orthodox community. On the basis of these, he concluded that the Greeks stood with the Catholics on this issue.[41] His approach assumed that members of the church should know the tenets of their faith and Protestant as well as Catholic authors held this view.[42] During the early modern period the western churches developed a self-conscious confessional identity, which had as its prerequisite the internalisation of the appro-

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Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Belief and History* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1985), pp. 42; 51. However, here he concentrates on the development of the meaning of the English word rather than the Latin.

[39] John Bossy, 'Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim', *Past and Present* 95 (1982), 5.

[40] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 3.

[41] John Covel, *Some Account of the Present Greek Church, with Reflections on their Present Doctrine and Discipline; Particularly in the Eucharist, and the Rest of their Seven Pretended Sacraments* (Cambridge, 1722), p. iv.

[42] Rycaut, *Churches*, preface.

priate theological positions.[43] However, the Orthodox faithful experienced their religion differently. Rycaut, a seventeenth-century consul to the Levant Company in Smyrna, reports that they:

> can by no means be induced to believe the English, and others of the reformed Churches, to be Orthodox Christians, because they neither use Fasting, nor reverence the sign of the Cross.[44]

People's Orthodox identity centred around active involvement in church practices rather than adherence to particular theological positions. The Jesuits too discovered the affection in which the rites and rituals of the Orthodox church were held. They realised the major barrier to conversion to Catholicism lay in the converts' obligation to leave the Orthodox liturgy, and therefore missionaries allowed them to make a private profession of faith and attend both the Catholic and Orthodox services.[45] The Uniate rite was developed to remove this obstacle to conversion, for it was doctrinally Roman Catholic, but followed the form of the Orthodox liturgy.

Contemporary western commentators often interpreted the Orthodox emphasis on practice rather than belief in a negative way, implying that Orthodoxy was an empty shell of superstitious action. This was manifestly not the case: Orthodox rites and rituals were not superficial but contained symbolic meaning and drew the laity into worship:

> the Eucharistic liturgy, more than anything else, is identified with the reality of the Church itself, for it manifests both the humiliation of God in assuming mortal flesh, and the mysterious presence among men of the eschatological kingdom. It points at these central realities of the faith not through concepts but through symbols and signs intelligible to the entire worshipping congregation.[46]

In contrast to the West, Orthodoxy continued to be characterised by an experiential rather than intellectual approach to religion. Theology was not reduced to logical propositions but focused on the encounter with God and the ability of each individual to receive

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[43] Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700: a Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 6–7 outlines the factors he sees as necessary for the creation of a confessional identity.

[44] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 135.

[45] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: the Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 115.

[46] Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 6.

God within him or herself.[47] Living in the West and participating in intellectual Catholicism at the highest levels, Allatios' understanding of 'religion' may not have been equivalent to that of his Orthodox compatriots.

In the West, the development in the meaning of '*religio*' was part of the 'major shift in religious mentality' that occurred in the wake of the Reformations and brought about a fundamental change in the relationship between popular and official religion.[48] The Catholic reform of popular practices was given impetus by the slur of pagan magic hurled at their rites and rituals by the Protestants. It intensified the campaign to purge the faith of popular superstition and to clarify the distinction between religion and magic. Protestants and Catholics alike viewed many popular practices as survivals of pre-Christian rites and associated them with the demonic.[49] Christian prayers and objects which had been sanctified by the church had also played a role in popular religion but the laity was warned not to use ecclesiastical rites and prayers in inappropriate ways; the 'misuse' of Christian prayers and words was blasphemy.[50] The hierarchy stressed that ecclesiastical rites and rituals had no 'magical' automatic efficacy nor were particular objects inherently sacred. The laity could not and should not manipulate the world through these means, for access to the supernatural was reserved to the church. Rather, the faith of the laity, the church insisted, should rest on internal conversion and deep inner piety. Of course the reforms only gradually made headway, achieved varying levels of success, and proceeded at varying paces in different geographical areas. They were not always welcomed and there were tensions between traditional and Tridentine Catholicism; the post-Tridentine church sought to separate the sacred from the profane and confine it to ecclesiastically sanctioned use, beginning the slow process of the 'disenchantment of the world'.[51]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. 212.

[49] Ibid.

[50] David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: the System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester, 1992), p. 133.

[51] On this process see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1991), pp. 27–89. On the limits of this development for the laity see Bob Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the "Disenchantment of the World"', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23:3 (1993), 475–94.

In contrast, the less prescriptive approach of the Orthodox church, arising from its apophatic theology meant that it had never shown the same interest as the Catholic authorities in regulating the beliefs and practices of the faithful.[52] The laity and clergy on the whole had a shared outlook and in contrast to the western situation both continued to inhabit an 'enchanted universe' throughout the early modern period.[53] Popular belief in magic was on the whole viewed as erroneous and foolish but was not generally regarded as endangering salvation. The use of ecclesiastical substances, such as holy oil, in popular healing practices was accepted as part of the pious response to illness. Therefore Orthodox concepts of piety were framed in different terms to those coming out of the official Catholic church. In the Orthodox church, as in the Catholic, there were variations in position, particularly as Orthodoxy began to be affected by the outlooks of the rival western confessions. The Catholicising metropolitan of Kiev, Peter of Moghila (1633–47), was concerned about the magical use of holy oil in unction practices. The patriarch Kyril Loukaris wished to bring about a wider reformation of the Orthodox church, but he had little support and his successors did not share his ambitions.[54]

The physical situation of the Orthodox church meant that it was never in a position to implement such a widespread programme of reforms as the western churches had carried out. The western reforms of the early modern period rested on certain key building blocks that were absent in Orthodox lands. These were given universal application by the energetic Catholic church in the years following the Council of Trent, although many of the reforms themselves were drawn from well-springs of reform that predated the Reformation. Certain factors, however, meant that these reforms were to be more widespread and long lasting than those of the medieval period. The Tridentine reforming bishop, exemplified by the energetic bishop of

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[52] Nikos Kokosalakis, 'The Political Significance of Popular Religion in Greece' *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 64 (1987), 41; Ellen Badone, 'Introduction' in Ellen Badone (ed.), *Religious Orthodoxy*, p. 17.

[53] Badone, 'Introduction', p. 17.

[54] Kyril, the patriarch with Protestant sympathies, had a troubled patriarchate, being deposed no less than six times during the period 1612–1638. Following his final deposition, he was discovered strangled in a ditch. On Loukaris see Gunnar Hering, *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο καί ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική 1620–1638*, trans. Demosthenes Kourtovik (Athens, 1992).

Milan, Carlo Borromeo, was a cornerstone of the Catholic renewal. In some places, such as Spain, the church could depend on the secular authorities to enforce its reforms. In many areas, however, it was the Tridentine reforming bishop who was the key figure. The Council of Trent had promulgated decrees against pluralism and absenteeism, locating the bishop firmly in his see. Through him the church sought to take the reforms to the localities. Among other duties, he was responsible for the reform of the regulars in his diocese and for establishing educational programmes for both priests and laity. The education of priests was an essential part of the reform programme. Of all the clergy, priests had the closest contact with the laity and it was vital that they too preached Tridentine Christianity. Some Italian bishops also set up basic 'Schools of Christian Doctrine' to teach the laity prayers and Christian behaviour. In remoter areas, where the bishops failed, the two great weapons of the church, the Inquisition and the missionary orders, were deployed. From around 1570 popular errors were the main focus of Inquisitorial activities, although in Italy these were thought to arise out of ignorance, rather than diabolic contact. Missionary activity combatted errors by the time-honoured method of accommodation, or by providing parallel alternatives for unacceptable practices. Dramatic religious devotions like the Forty-hours Devotion were offered in place of festivals, such as Carnival and May Day that were viewed as unchristian.[55] None of the reforms were fully successful and their impact varied across Europe, but the pious and educated, in particular the educated priesthood, gradually began to withdraw from popular practice in a way that had not happened before.[56]

All these factors — the support of the state, reforming bishops and priests, missionary orders — were absent in the Orthodox East. The history of the period, as Sir Steven Runciman described it, was of a church in captivity.[57] The patriarchate under the Ottomans faced

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[55] David Gentilcore, "'Adapt Yourself to the People's Capabilities": Missionary Strategies, Methods and Impact in the Kingdom of Naples, 1600–1800', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 14 (1994), 277–78.

[56] Michael A. Mullet, *The Catholic Reformation* (London, 1999), pp. 158–60.

[57] Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: a Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge, 1968) remains the most accessible work on the Greek church during the early modern period. See also Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti. A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford, 1964).

different challenges and had different priorities from the western churches, although this, as we shall see, did not mean that the East was wholly isolated from the tremors caused by the seismic struggles in the West. The majority of the Greek Orthodox lived under Ottoman rule or on the Aegean Islands governed by Catholic colonisers who had been resident since the thirteenth century. The temporal rulers of Greek Orthodox lands, both Ottoman and Catholic, had little interest in the reform of the Orthodox church. Moreover, there was no powerful episcopal figure to carry out reforms at the local level. Indeed in areas under Catholic rule there was no Orthodox bishop at all; the Orthodox clergy was overseen by the Catholic hierarchy.[58] There was also no Orthodox equivalent of the reforming missionary orders. Equally, local priests were in no position to carry out reform. In their level of education and way of life they were close to the laity. Unlike Catholic priests they were allowed to marry, and the majority sustained themselves through farming their plots of land, and charging for administering the sacraments. There were no institutions dedicated to the training of priests and before ordination candidates only had to prove that they could read and write and had memorised the books of the church.[59] Nevertheless, the reports of travellers, who expected to find the Ottoman Greeks fluent in the language of their ancestors, exaggerated the low standard of education of the population. Not all Orthodox priests were without education and in some areas they ran schools. Catholic missionaries also provided schooling and Allatios received his early education at a missionary foundation on Chios. However, there were no universities and like Allatios, many children were sent abroad to western colleges and universities.

The East also lacked the structures necessary to support a widespread reform. In the West, the work of the reformers would have been impossible without the newly centralised organisation in Rome

[58] Aglaia E. Kasdagli, *Land and Marriage Settlements in the Aegean: a Case Study of Seventeenth-Century Naxos* (Venice, 1999), p. 49.

[59] On the education of the priests see Joseph Georgirenes, *A Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos and Mount Athos* (London, 1678), p. 40; on the guidance of the laity: Rycaut, *Churches*, preface. On the strictures against charging for the sacraments see Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 114; on the tariffs charged: Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 114. See also R. Simon, *The Critical History of the Religions and Customs of the Eastern Nations*, trans. A. Lovell (London, 1685), p. 22; Thomas Smith, *Greek Church*, p. 90.

and improved communications. The various reform projects were coordinated by the increasingly monarchical papacy through committees or Congregations. The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, for example, was created in 1622 to oversee the missionary activity of the various orders. The work of the missionary orders was facilitated by improved communications, which made travel quicker and safer. Travel and the printing press made the standardisation of liturgical texts possible, giving the reforms more permanence than their medieval predecessors.[60] In contrast, the Orthodox church lacked the necessary tools to implement a programme of reform. Communications remained poor and travel was dangerous as piracy and banditry were rife. Moreover, the Greeks did not have a printing press until 1627 and this was closed down less than a year later when the French ambassador complained to the Porte about the anti-Catholic nature of the publications.[61]

A contrast can also be drawn in terms of the relative wealth and influence of the two central churches in Rome and Constantinople. In the West, the Council of Trent had laid down that synods should be held to disseminate the reform decrees in the localities: the religion of the centre was to be imposed on the peripheries. The influence of Rome was also spread through the reformed liturgical works. The revised Missal was published in 1570 and was based on the Roman editions because they were thought to be closest to that of the early church.[62] It excluded what it saw as medieval accretions and purely local saints, forbidding deviation from the published Roman norm except with the express permission of the papacy. In practice, there was much greater negotiation between the representatives of pre- and post-Tridentine Catholicism as bishops sought to establish themselves and make contact with their flock.[63] But in theory, at least, the Catholic world had to follow the rite of Rome and the power of Rome stretched out through the activity of missionaries and bishops across Europe, even as far as China and America.

Meanwhile, the Orthodox church faced mounting debts, threats to its position from both Islam and Catholicism and the decreasing

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[60] Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. 218.
[61] Philip Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924* (London, 1995), p. 46.
[62] Bireley, *Refashioning*, p. 59.
[63] Ibid., pp. 144; 146.

hold of the patriarch on the government of the church. All these factors were a direct consequence of its new position in the Ottoman state. The sultan took a great and active interest in the selection of the patriarch because it was an important political as well as ecclesiastical appointment. It was the sultan's confirmation in the form of a *berat* that allowed the patriarch to take up position. Financial concerns, although not always uppermost, were often an extremely important factor in his choice. Various parties, including Catholic, Anglican and Protestant groups who wished to influence the decision, jostled to provide the appropriate 'gift' to the sultan to secure the position for their favoured Orthodox candidate. The financial demands of the patriarchal elections impoverished the ecclesiastical treasury. In 1672 the debt of the church was $350,000 or 700 purses.[64] The factional infighting and the venality of the Porte also meant that the patriarch changed frequently. Often there was more than one election per year, making it difficult for the patriarch to stamp his authority on the church. Any attempts to 'purify' popular beliefs and practices therefore remained localised and sporadic and were more similar to the medieval pattern than that of the early modern West.

Ottoman rule did not leave the relationship between popular and official Orthodoxy, or even popular Orthodoxy itself unchanged. The Orthodox church is often characterised as constant, preserving the tradition of the Church Fathers through the upheavals of its earthly existence. Yet, although these external developments may not have affected the central theology of the church, they did alter the relationship between the church and the faithful.[65] The temporal position of the church altered when the conquering sultan made the patriarch Gennadios II Scholarios (1454–1456; 1462–1463) and his successors responsible for the civil jurisdiction over the Orthodox population. This development had an impact on the ecclesiastical approach to the transgressions of the laity and the relationship between sin and crime. During the Ottoman period there was also much closer contact with other religious traditions. Most obviously the Orthodox of the Balkans came into close contact with Islam and

[64] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 98.

[65] On continuity in the Orthodox tradition see Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1963), p. 203; See Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 139–40.

popular Islam, something that had occurred at a much earlier date in Asia Minor.[66]

Therefore the official Orthodox church and the official Catholic church had different attitudes toward popular religion. The centres of the two churches existed in very different conditions and could draw on very different levels of resources and this affected the relationship between the church hierarchy and the people. Allatios partook in the western developments which occurred as a consequence of the Catholic renewal. He participated in the ecclesiastical bureaucracy, he sat on the Congregations and his understanding of religion took account of the western approach in terms of doctrinal positions. It is therefore important to bear in mind that Allatios' Catholicism may have affected the value judgements he made with respect to Orthodox popular religion. We cannot assume that he represents an Orthodox perspective. As a result, any examination of the *De opinationibus* must take into account the influence of Allatios' western background while remaining sensitive to subtle shifts in perspective, bearing in mind that Allatios' world view, like his work, is an amalgamation of different traditions.[67]

Even if Allatios' attitude was influenced by his Catholicism, it does not mean that the *De opinationibus* is devoid of value for an investigation of Orthodox popular religion. Similar theoretical considerations can be applied to the process of cultural mediation between the wider traditions of Orthodoxy and Catholicism as to the relationship of popular and ecclesiastical religion within a tradition. There was a cultural interchange between the two traditions which flowed in both directions on a more general as well as a personal level. The *De opinationibus* was not an isolated discussion of Orthodox popular beliefs but was part of the wider cultural interaction taking place between the two religious traditions. However, the hegemonic position of the Catholic church meant that the flow of influence was

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[66] On the relationship between Christianity and Islam see Hasluck, *Christianity* and Speros Vryonis Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1971).

[67] Peter Burke, 'Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities', *History of European Ideas* 7 (1986), 443. See Michael G. Baylor, 'On the Front Between the Cultures: Thomas Müntzer on Popular and Learned Culture', *History of European Ideas* 11 (1989), 523–36 where Müntzer mediates between popular and elite culture but represents neither position in its entirety.

usually asymmetric with Catholicism having a greater effect on Orthodoxy than vice versa. The Catholic influence was far reaching: the contrast between the highly educated and well-funded missionaries and the often poverty-stricken local priests meant that the former were in a powerful position to spread their faith. The influence of Orthodoxy on Catholicism was less strong, although the papacy was interested in the relationship between Orthodoxy and the early church. If the *De opinationibus* does not provide direct information about the dynamics within Orthodoxy, it does offer clues to the links between Catholicism and Orthodoxy during this period and highlights the differences in their approach to popular practice.

A Model for the Investigation of Orthodox Popular Religion

The foregoing discussion reveals the factors a model for the investigation of the *De opinationibus* must take into account. It must allow for the relationship that existed between and within the traditions of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the position of the author in relation to these traditions, and the changes in the various relations over time. In a variation of the model of overlapping groups and subgroups described above, David Gentilcore in *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* considers healing practices using a model of three overlapping, permeable groups in order to examine different types of healers and sources of healing, but also different understandings of the healing practices.[68] A similar methodology can be used to explore the *De opinationibus* where the three overlapping circles represent official Orthodoxy, popular Orthodoxy and Catholicism. This approach allows not only the examination of different categories of belief and practice, but also varying perspectives on the same practice. Throughout the book we will concentrate on a practice described by Allatios and examine it from these three different angles, analysing their interactions and interrelations. Where necessary these three main groups can be further divided, to take account of variations within each tradition.

Such a method encourages an examination of the similarities and differences in the approaches of the different traditions. The location

[68] David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester, 1998), p. 3.

of the boundaries between formal and popular will vary, or may not even exist, depending upon the viewpoint. For example, is unction to be viewed in the context of popular beliefs or within the narrower boundaries of formal theology? Does a layperson performing an exorcism evaluate his/her actions in the same way as a member of the church hierarchy? How do the different perspectives interact? Recently Charles Stewart has shown the extent to which the great and little traditions in modern Greece share common basic features and Kokosalakis has taken this a step further and argued that the Orthodox church has always had a greater capacity to absorb popular religiosity into official structures than its two western cousins.[69] Using the overlapping model will enable us to consider the extent to which these conclusions hold for the period of the Tourkokratia.

The permeable boundaries of the model permit us to take into account the movement of practices and perspectives with and between the three main groups. No individual is made to represent any one position, and may move freely between the different perspectives. Allatios therefore is liberated from having to represent any of the three traditions in its entirety and we can trace the influence of each on his approach. The permeable boundaries also allow for change over time, as people, practices and viewpoints shift between and within the different groups as they are influenced by the wider environment in which they occur. This feature of the model is particularly important for a consideration of an early modern text such as the *De opinationibus* which was written in a period when Orthodoxy came face to face with ideas and attitudes from outside its own tradition. As we will see in the next chapter, Allatios' approach to popular religion is synchronic rather than diachronic. His belief that popular customs always remain the same leaves no room for change, emphasising instead the constancy of the Orthodox tradition. His methodology cannot be accepted at face value but equally, in a book which focuses on his work, Allatios' own perspective cannot be ignored. By taking into account chronological change, this model enables a critique of Allatios' outlook. Themes of continuity and change in Orthodox popular religion will be explored using the Byzantine and early modern sources that Allatios provides in his

[69] Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 13–14; Kokosalakis, 'Political Significance', 41.

text, and contrasting seventeenth-century accounts with those from earlier periods.

Of course, beliefs and practices varied geographically as well as temporally. Popular beliefs and practices and social and cultural structures varied not only between islands but also between the different communities on each of the islands. The paucity of evidence does not permit the historian to follow the example of the anthropologist and focus on the details of a particular village community. Instead, the investigation here concentrates mainly on the Cyclades and Chios, islands of similar social and historical conditions, exposed to similar cultural influences. The geographical focus of this book also means that it only rarely touches upon the influence of Islam on popular beliefs and practices. This is not meant to deny the importance of Muslim-Christian interactions. However, on the Cycladic Islands there was little Ottoman settlement and the Catholic influence after generations of Latin rule, coupled with a powerful missionary presence, outweighed that of the Islamic. Chios too, had undergone a long period of Genoese rule and although there was much greater Ottoman settlement here than in the Cyclades, the favoured position awarded to the island meant that the Orthodox population was allowed far greater religious and social freedom than on the mainland. Nevertheless, while the book might not consider the interaction between popular Orthodoxy and popular Islam, it does place the popular beliefs within the context of the political and social context of the Ottoman Empire.

Before placing the contents of the *De opinationibus* in their social and religious contexts, we turn our attention to the text and its author. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on Allatios and his text: chapter 2 deals in more detail with the content of the *De opinationibus* and its sources, placing it in the context of the other source material available for an investigation of Orthodox popular religion during the Tourkokratia; chapter 3 moves on to examine in more detail Allatios' own approach to the source material, considering the influence of his background and intellectual training. Chapters 4–10 are devoted to the discussion of individual popular beliefs. Stewart has criticised the tendency amongst scholars in the past to examine the *exotika* individually, as separate beings: it harks back to the folklorists and their search for survivals in ancient Greece.[70] However, the aim of

[70] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 162 argues that different communities divide up the demons

the examination here is not to look for connections to the past but to examine the role played by certain beliefs and practices at particular times of life. Thus chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the child-stealing demon and her relationship to Orthodox ceremonies of baptism and marriage; chapters 7 and 8 contain an evaluation of the relationship between the popular revenant or *vrykolakas* and the ecclesiastical revenant or *tympaniaios*; chapter 9 centres on popular healing and chapter 10 describes the way in which Allatios uses one particular aspect of popular religion, the *stoicheion* or spirit of place, to tie together the themes of his text. Through these discussions the relationship between the three groups is slowly unravelled, providing insights into Allatios' viewpoint. Popular and official Orthodox perspectives are not identical (chapter 4), but nor is an official Catholic approach identical to an official Orthodox one (chapter 5). Instead, Allatios' Catholicism encourages him to interpret popular beliefs in accordance with his ecumenical principles, both by drawing connections between Orthodox popular beliefs and Catholic doctrine (chapters 7–8) and by tracing back the historical links between the churches (chapter 9). However, for Allatios, religious experiences, both Catholic and Orthodox, official and popular can be placed within a framework of western Neoplatonism, which binds all approaches to religion into a unified whole (chapter 10).

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in different ways and give them different names. Instead of examining each demon in turn he treats them as a 'category of culture' gathering them together into a pool of interchangeable features in order to investigate the common themes arising from them.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOURCES FOR ORTHODOX POPULAR RELIGION

Popular religion is always difficult to investigate because typically it is rarely recorded, and, when it is, it is usually noted down by people who do not wholly share the beliefs or participate fully in the practices. The relaxed attitude of the Orthodox church towards popular practices makes them even more difficult to investigate because on the whole they were ignored by both secular and ecclesiastical writers and therefore references are widely dispersed. Fortunately for historians, the changing political situation in the East meant that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both the Orthodox clergy and westerners began to take a greater interest in popular customs. Orthodox ecclesiastical documents start to describe proscribed activities in more detail and western travellers began to record the practices they witnessed. But the *De opinationibus* stands out from these sources as the only work dedicated to the beliefs and practices of 'the Greeks' and it is central to any investigation into popular Orthodoxy of either the Byzantine or Ottoman periods. For this reason extracts from the work are well known, particularly the chapters on the *vrykolakas*. However, the text has always been approached in a piecemeal fashion and much of it has been neglected. Therefore before discussing the other sources which are relevant for the study of Orthodox popular religion, an overview of Allatios' letter is presented below to provide some idea of the variety of beliefs and practices it describes and the extensive range of sources it employs.

The De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus *of Leo Allatios*

The light-hearted tone of the *De opinationibus* belies its fundamental importance for scholars of Orthodox popular religion. The letter contains a collection of popular beliefs and practices extracted from a variety of Byzantine and post-Byzantine sources and the excerpts are arranged according to their subject matter. Allatios treats them in turn, first quoting from the original Greek manuscript, then translating

the source into Latin. Successive sources on the same subject are quoted in chronological order and they are all bound together with Allatios' analysis.

The Text

Chapter I

In the first chapter Allatios introduces his topic: the customs, morals, virtues and vices of humankind. His addressee Zacchias, whose own writings also show an interest in popular beliefs, was well versed in western literature of the past and Allatios is forced to concentrate on the Greeks and on the modern period in order to offer him something new. Although human beings are naturally inclined to concentrate on the past, his concern is with people of his own time; the present being as worthy a topic for investigation as the past. Customs and morals are an ideal subject for study since they change little over time, unlike military and political events which are difficult to recover from the depths of the past. Throughout the work Allatios demonstrates his belief in continuity for each of his topics, using a series of quotations from different historical periods.

Chapter II

Allatios begins with an issue of great interest to his western contemporaries — witchcraft. The *gello* of the Orthodox East has a long pedigree stretching back to ancient times, but she can be explained in terms of the western witch. She attacks newly-born children, sucks their blood and is also harmful to their mothers. Baptism has great power against her but in spite of this the Greeks do not baptise until a week after birth.

Chapters III–VI

Various other methods are employed to defend the child, such as talismans tied to the cot and anointing with holy oil. Allatios particularly approves of the latter. He selects a number of sources to demonstrate the power of oil in the case of demonic and non-demonic illnesses. Holy water too has similar healing properties and the use of such substances, blessed by the church, demonstrates the piety of the Greek nation. Along with his Byzantine witnesses, Allatios himself has experienced miraculous healing through this method.

Chapters VII–VIII
The population is inclined towards other procedures which Allatios finds less acceptable. He is dubious of the efficacy of two exorcisms directed against the *gello*, which he has transcribed from manuscripts, and pokes fun at the pretended piety of travelling monks who offer cures to the laity.

Chapter IX
Throughout the text he carries on a dialogue with the Byzantine author Michael Psellos, competing with him over his knowledge of popular customs. This is first apparent in chapter IX where he criticises Psellos' interpretation of sickness. While Psellos explains this in terms of natural causes, Allatios' research indicates that the disease should be attributed to witchcraft.

Chapter X
In chapter X Allatios accepts Psellos' interpretation of the *babutzikarios*, a kind of frightening goblin that is supposed to appear over the Christmas period. This time Psellos' explanation takes account of the experience of the laity. Even though such demons do not exist, people do actually see the demonic beings but this is because of hallucinations brought about by over-indulgence in the seasonal festivities. Allatios points out that this *exotiko* is not always understood in this way. The Byzantine dictionary *Suidas* describes the *babutzikarios* in terms of *ephialtes* — a nightmare brought on by indigestion. However, the 'common people' continue to believe that those born at Christmas are every year possessed by the devil during this week and attack people on the roads, asking, 'Rope or lead?' Those who reply 'Lead', the possessed person crushes to death; those who reply 'Rope', he sets free. The Greeks distract the possessed over the Christmas season by making them count the holes in a sieve. This kind of *babutzikarios* is identical to the creature called by others '*kallikantzaros*', which is the focus of Allatios' next chapter.

Chapter XI
Kallikantzaroi are also goblin-like creatures that appear between Christmas and New Year. People try to ward them off by wearing new clothes and the population of Chios believes that they congregate in wooded and inaccessible places, where those of unsound mind are also thought to originate. In order to prevent those born between

Christmas and New Year becoming *kallikantzaroi* they burn the soles of their feet and remove their nails.

Chapters XII–XVII

The most feared of all the creatures discussed by Allatios is the *vrykolakas* (*bulcolaca*, as he calls it) or revenant. It is described as a dead body, possessed by the devil, which rises black and swollen from the dead and roams the streets bringing disease and death. People destroy it by burning the body, something the priests strenuously resist because it denies the deceased any possibility of resurrection at the Last Judgement. The church presents absolution as an alternative method of destruction, while denying its real existence. Allatios gives an account of a revenant known as the *tympaniaios* that also appears as an undecayed corpse. In this case, the body is prevented from decaying by an excommunication from the church. The corpse remains in its black and swollen state until the priest pronounces absolution, at which point loud cracking is heard as the body decays into dust. Allatios validates the existence of such bodies, recording that he himself saw one as a child on Chios. A grave was opened and a black and swollen body discovered within. The children began throwing things at it, and amazed by the power with which the objects rebounded, began to use the body as a trampoline, until the priest, scandalised by such behaviour, closed the grave.

Chapter XVIII

There is some confusion over the meaning of an undecomposed body. Failure of a body to dissolve at death is an indication of sanctity as well as possession by the devil. Allatios deals with this question in his usual way, through reference to the Byzantine past. He concludes that the two types of body are easily distinguished on sight: saints look and smell like saints, revenants like revenants.

Chapter XIX

He then turns his attention to the beautiful women called *nereides*, who inhabit wooded and watery places. They lust after young men and take them as lovers. These men are very fortunate and often become rich. The *nereides* also have a great longing for children. Allatios recounts a tale of a young girl who fell into a well and had to be rescued by her father. Amazingly, both the girl and her father emerged bone dry. Afterwards, the girl said that she had been invited

into the well by *nereides* and had thrown herself in freely. While the *nereides* made no attempt to hurt the girl, they could be extremely harmful, particularly at midday, seizing those who wander from the path and deforming them in some way. Special care should therefore be taken when defecating in the fields, but the danger could be averted by spitting on the ground three times beforehand.

We are told that the *nereides* are often also called the 'beautiful ladies of the mountains', although, through a long and complex argument which proceeds through linguistic analogy, a text from Psellos suggests that the 'beauty of the mountains' is not a demon but is associated with the Virgin Mary, the Cross and Wisdom. Psellos proceeds to deconstruct other popular understandings of demons: *barychnas* is not a demon but a brain condition, as is *ephialtes*.

Chapter XX

Allatios returns to the debate with Psellos that he initiated in earlier chapters, arguing that the Byzantine philosopher confuses opinions of the 'common people' with diseases. Allatios argues that *barychnas* and the *babutzikarios* have nothing to do with the 'beauty of the mountains'. The former *exotika* strike people lying in bed, whereas *kallikantzaroi, vrykolakes* and *nereides* appear in the world outside the house. For Allatios the latter should be compared to spirits of place, or *stoicheia*.

Chapters XXI–XXII

Stoicheia are spirits which dwell in houses and they often take the form of a lizard or snake. A special relationship exists between the household and the *stoicheion*: if the creature is well treated, it will bring good fortune to the inhabitants; if it is badly treated, loss or death will follow. Allatios reveals the close connection by relating an account of his own experience with a *stoicheion* that predicted his arrival and departure from Chios. The word '*stoicheion*' has a wide range of applications and also refers to the powerful spirits resident in the planets and the humbler variety present in every living thing. Talismanic objects made by magicians in order to control human beings and the natural world are given this name too.

Chapter XXIII

The *stoicheion* is not the only way of predicting the future. It can also be divined through close observation of natural objects. Allatios

describes his encounter with a miraculous icon that revealed the fate of absent friends. If a candle lit in front of the icon burnt brightly, they fared well, but if it went out, they had died. Allatios notes that in the past the behaviour of candles has been understood to indicate divine and saintly intentions. On one occasion, we are told, God caused the candles to flicker in order to indicate his deposition of the current patriarch; on another, the burning flame of a candle indicated that a saint had accepted responsibility for protecting the unborn child of the emperor.

Chapter XXIV

It is possible to control the natural world through prayers and rituals. At Epiphany seawater is miraculously turned from salt to sweet after the benediction. Such blessed water should never become stale. If it does, it bodes ill for the community. The same is true of blessed bread. The decay and corruption of sanctified elements is a bad omen.

Chapters XXV–XXIX

Various rituals are carried out to try to guarantee good fortune and avert evil. On the first of January offerings of fruit and bread are made in the fields to ensure a good harvest. Prayers can be said to avert a storm at sea, and again Allatios relates his own experience. Crowing hens foretell evil for the household and to avert it the hen should be decapitated on the threshold with a single blow of an axe. The natural world is also influenced by events in the divine sphere. When St Isidore of Chios was martyred, the resin from the mastic tree turned from a liquid into the useful resinous form it is found in today. By far the most attention is paid to the plagues of caterpillars which descend upon the fields every spring. Allatios quotes remedies ranging from taking legal action, through the use of charms by menstruating women, to prayers sanctioned by the church.

Chapters XXX–XXXI

Allatios concludes with descriptions of the holy fire in Jerusalem, citing accounts from eastern and western observers. They relate that the holy fire descends every year according to the old date of Easter. When the date of Orthodox Easter was changed to correspond with that of the West, the miracles ceased, as did the miraculous uncovering of bodies in the Nile, which had occurred annually until that point.

Allatios seems to move through his text without any underlying aim, but the order in which he cites his sources follows moments of crisis in the human life cycle. He moves from child-stealing demons and witchcraft to baptism, then discusses methods of healing and the *kallikantzaroi*, before covering practices concerning death, and concluding with beliefs about the relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds. Through the discussion of these beliefs and practices he develops a number of themes. In particular, he draws his readers' attention to the similarities and differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism and the role popular demons play in the pathology of disease. He quotes from texts where madness, childhood sickness, and inebriation are either caused by demons or cause the invalid to see demons. However, he does not reduce all popular beliefs to disease. In the final section he deals with wider concepts of causation and the role of spiritual action in the natural world, investigating the relationship between individual objects, between objects and people or animals, between words and actions, and between nature and God.

Allatios moves from source to source with often only the minimum of discussion. Therefore Allatios' choice and arrangement of sources, combined with the judicious use of his own experiences, are far more revealing of his interests and attitudes than his relatively sparse commentary. An examination of the selection and arrangement of his sources therefore provides an insight into the structure and meaning of the text.

Sources Contained in the De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus[1]

Allatios' sources are both oral and textual. From his own time he supplies testimonies from his contemporaries and accounts of his own experiences in the sphere of popular practices. His memories bring the text to life. When he recounts his own past his language changes and, freed from the need to replicate Byzantine Greek constructions in Latin, gathers pace and varies in tone. Thus his own recollections of divine healing, miraculous icons, *stoicheia*, the *vrykolakas* and

[1] For ease of access, references to Allatios' citations are not given here but are listed in the conspectus at the end of this book.

control of the waves stand out from the rest of the text.[2] However, it is the sweep of Allatios' sources and the depth of his textual knowledge that give the *De opinationibus* its richness, taking it beyond the realms of personal reminiscence, consciously grounding Allatios' childhood experiences in the Orthodox tradition. Allatios' textual sources range chronologically from Homer to his own day, and encompass many different genres, including saints' lives, exorcisms and histories. He justifies his use of such a wide range of material on the grounds that the practices and beliefs he describes always remain the same and therefore it is legitimate for him to employ earlier source material in his investigation into the beliefs of the Greeks of his own day. In his introduction to the *De opinationibus*, Allatios cautions those wishing to "delve into events more distant in time and those that have long passed away", fearing that they will only reveal things "as if through a superficial conjecture and a distorting mirror". For Allatios, writing in the seventeenth century, the study of popular practices — "customs, morals, virtues, vices, enthusiasms" — avoids this problem as for him these are 'always the same'.[3] It is this assumption that gives him the freedom to build up his argument using texts drawn from a wide time period. He was present at the Vatican Library at the ideal time to bring to light little known Byzantine manuscripts, as his period of employment coincided with the cataloguing project, which was guided by the head scriptor Felice Contelori and then later Annibale Albani.[4] The following overview of the sources he uses reveals the importance of the Byzantine legacy for his letter and conversely his own importance in the history of Byzantine studies.[5]

Early Sources

In contrast to many contemporaneous works on Greek subjects, very few of Allatios' sources are classical. Occasionally he quotes from an

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[2] Allatios, *De opin.* V, pp. 122–24; XXIII, p. 168; XXII, pp. 167–68; XIII, p. 148; XXVI, p. 175; XIII, p. 148.

[3] Ibid., I p. 114.

[4] Jean Bignami Odier, and José Ruysschaert, *La Bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI: recherches sur l'histoire des collections de manuscrits* (Vatican, 1973), pp. 110; 112; Paul Canart, *Les Vaticani Graeci 1487–1962: notes et documents pour l'histoire d'un fonds de manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Vaticane* (Vatican, 1979), p. 6.

[5] On Allatios' intellectual circles and Byzantine projects see the informative work of Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', esp. ch. 4.

ancient source to demonstrate the origin of the custom: at the start of his section on the *gello* he notes that the belief goes back to Sappho and he quotes a proverb from the sophist Zenobius, in whose work the relevant fragment of Sappho is preserved. Interestingly the rest of his classical quotations — from Homer, the *Testament of Solomon*, *The Alexandrian Chronicle*, Albinus, and Aelianus — appear in the final section on the *stoicheion*, where Allatios deals with the relationship between spirits and the natural world. Neoplatonists are in the majority here, with citations from Eunapius and Olympiodorus, but early Neoplatonic Christian texts by Tertullian and Gregory of Nyssa are also mentioned, together with the seventh-century chronicle of John of Antioch. In this particular area Christian and pre-Christian sources are deliberately chosen because of their common ideology.

Byzantine Saints' Lives

Unsurprisingly, in Allatios' section on healing, extracts from saints' lives predominate and most extracts come from saints who died before the schism of 1054. Healing miracles are taken from the works of Palladius (363/364–431), Cyril of Scythopolis (c. 525–559+), the *Lives* of Neilos the Younger (910–1004), St Theodore of Studios (759–826) and St Paul of Latros (d. 955).[6] *Saints' Lives* stand on the boundary between popular and official orthodoxy and are often used to investigate popular religion. Usually written by a monk, their aim was to spread the fame of the saint and attract people to the cult. Therefore they had to tap into the needs of the laity. As the *Lives* were written by authors located within the monastic or ecclesiastical church, the beliefs and practices they describe are usually limited to those the church accepted. Nevertheless, every so often glimpses of other beliefs appear. In *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* (784–806) by Ignatios the Deacon, the patriarch's uncle presides over a court case where two women stand accused of being *gelloudes*. Although the case is thrown out, it does provide Allatios with evidence concerning the child-stealing demon. Some of Allatios' other works reveal that his knowledge of hagiographical sources was far from superficial. Compositions such as the *De Nili Diatriba* and the *De Theodoris Diatriba*, which distinguish between authors, including saints, with the same

[6] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 122.

or similar names, also mention saints' lives.[7] The *Diatribae* were preliminaries to further research but required a detailed knowledge of the manuscripts and literary style of the authors. Allatios' work did not stop there. He produced editions of saints' lives, such as the *Vita S. Theodori Studitae* and the *Theodori Studitae Vita Michaele* and during the course of editing, Allatios recognised what is now acknowledged, that the two texts were composed by different authors.[8]

Byzantine Ecclesiastical Texts

In places Allatios mixes quotations from documents representing the official church view with descriptions of popular Orthodoxy. He cites the *Typikon*, which contained the order of the liturgical ceremonies throughout the year, the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite, an Epiphany hymn, and the 'Exorcism of St Tryphon', which is contained in the current *Mega Euchologion*, a liturgical book of the Orthodox Church.[9] Quotations from the *Typikon* and the work of Pseudo Dionysios occur in a discussion of the curative powers of holy water, underlining the official as well as popular acceptance of religious healing in the Orthodox tradition. The 'Exorcism of St Tryphon' is located in the final section which deals with the natural world where Allatios discusses a variety of methods for the removal of caterpillars from the fields. By using these sources Allatios' text brings to our attention the overlap between popular and official religion. Where the saints' lives consciously attempt to appeal to the faithful, in these more official texts there is a sense of accommodation between the popular and ecclesiastical traditions.

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[7] *De Nili Diatriba* in Leo Allatios (ed.) *Nili Ascetae Discipulis Ioannis Chrysostomos Epistolarum Libri IV* (Rome, 1668). *De Theodoris Diatriba* in Angelo Mai (ed.) *Novae patrum bibliothecae tomus primus [-decimus]* (Rome, 1853), vol. 6, pp. 72–202. Migne reproduces notes from the *Diatriba* in *PG* 99, cols. 49–58.

[8] *Vita S. Theodori Studitae*, *PG* 99, cols. 209–210. *Theodori Studitae Vita Michaele* in Mai, *Novae patrum bibliothecae*, vol. 6, pp. 293–363, and reproduced in Migne *PG* 99, cols 233–328. For Allatios' discussion of the authorship of these two *Lives* see his *De Theodoris*, p. 158; see also his introduction to the *Life* published in Mai.

[9] For ecclesiastical works printed in the West in the sixteenth century see Evro Layton, *The Sixteenth-Century Greek Book in Italy: Printers and Publishers for the Greek World* (Venice, 1994), pp. 131–78; for the *Typikon*, pp. 153–54.

Byzantine Histories

Allatios also demonstrates his detailed knowledge of Byzantine historians' works and their use for an investigation into popular culture. Although some of the authors were ecclesiastics, the histories are not ecclesiastical texts and are not primarily concerned with providing guidance for a pious life. Their accounts of popular beliefs and practices are therefore not limited to those acts which are recognised by the church. Histories provide the beliefs and practices they describe with social or even political contexts, and therefore offer a window into the workings of popular religion in everyday life. They deal with a wide variety of practices and every topic that Allatios discusses contains an extract from a Byzantine historian. He uses the *Ecclesiasticae Historiae* of Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, the fourteenth-century writer and cleric, for his investigation into the *gello*; and extracts from the *Short History* of Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople (806–815), and the *Chronographia* of the monastic chronicler, Theophanes the Confessor (760–818) in his attempt to discover the antecedents of the *vrykolakas*. The *Chronicle* of the twelfth-century historian Kedrenos is also cited in the context of the *vrykolakas*. Allatios quotes from him again in the section on the *stoicheion*, where he also refers to the Byzantine historian Kodinos. However, Allatios uses more frequent and extensive quotations from the fourteenth-century Byzantine author George Pachymeres than from any other author except Michael Psellos. He quotes from Pachymeres' *De Michaele et Andronico Paleologis* on five separate occasions. The topics of the quotations cover miraculous healing, the divine dismissal of a patriarch, the provision of a divine protector for an emperor's daughter and the ominous decomposition of consecrated bread. The last three accounts allow Allatios to discuss the view that God speaks to the world through signs in nature.

Allatios clearly had a detailed knowledge of the Byzantine histories he uses. He was, for example, aware of Kedrenos' dependence on Theophanes at certain points, and his interest in Pachymeres extended beyond the extracts he included in the *De opinationibus*.[10] At the time Allatios was writing there was no published edition of

[10] Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 147. As Allatios notes, much of Kedrenos' work is based on chronicles of other historians. He uses Symeon Magistros, George Hamartolos, and John Skylitzes as well as Theophanes.

Pachymeres and his manuscript annotations show that he had consulted three versions of the texts he had unearthed in the Vatican archives. He never produced an edition, although the extent of his work is apparent both in his *De Georgiis Diatriba*, where he provides a biography of Pachymeres, and in the commentary to his edition of the *History* of George Akropolites published in 1651.[11] The project was completed by Possinus and he produced the first printed version in 1666–69.[12] However, both Possinus and more recent authors have acknowledged the mammoth contribution of Allatios in this area.[13]

Other Byzantine Works

Allatios also had access to other kinds of writing that provided him with information on popular religion. He uses an extract from John Kantakouzenos' polemic *Contra Mahometem* in his discussion of the holy fire, and the Byzantine dictionary *Suidas* provides him with information on demons and their characteristics. Allatios also exploits *Suidas* to criticise accounts of popular practices in works attributed to the eleventh-century author, Michael Psellos. Nevertheless, Psellos exerts more influence on the *De opinationibus* than any other author that Allatios uses. Allatios cites him seven times, quoting extracts from five different works. These deal with the *gello*, the *babutzikarios, nereides, ephialtes, barychnas* as well as Neoplatonic ways to control the world and therefore his works cover a wider range than any other author or genre. Moreover, Allatios engages with Psellos' texts in a way that he does not do with the other works, taking Psellos to task

[11] See Leo Allatios (ed.), *Georgii Acropolitae magni logothetae Historia, Ioelis Chronographia compendiaria et Ioannis Canani Narratio de Bello CP. Accessit Diatriba de Georgiorum scriptis* (Paris, 1651). This work is also published in *PG* 143 cols. 407–22.

[12] *Georgii Pachymeris Michael Palaeologus, sive Historia rerum a Michaele Palaeologo ante imperium, et in imperio gestarum*, ed. Petrus Possinus (Rome, 1666); *Georgii Pachymeris Andronicus Palaeologus, sive Historia rerum ab Andronico Seniore in imperio gestarum usque ad annum eius aetatis undequinquagesimum*, ed. Petrus Possinus (Rome, 1669).

[13] See the introduction to Possinus' edition printed in Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 1, pp. x–xii. On Allatios' contribution to the first edition of Pachymeres' history see Albert Failler, 'La Tradition manuscrite de l'histoire de Georges Pachymère (Livres I–VI)', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 37 (1979), 132; 134; 201; George Pachymeres, *Georges Pachymérès. Relations Historiques*, ed. Albert Failler; trans. Vitalien Laurent (Paris, 1984), vol. 1, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv. Unfortunately Laurent's translation does not cover the books Allatios quotes from in the *De opinationibus*.

for his failure to consider the popular experience of the world in his interpretations of demons.[14] Today not all of these writings are attributed to the eleventh-century philosopher Michael Psellos, but this does not detract from Allatios' extensive knowledge of the works of Psellos and his imitators. In the *De Psellis* Allatios goes through the manuscripts of the various Pselloi in the Vatican archives in order to distinguish between different authors of the same name and suggests that the *De daemonibus* was a pseudonymous composition, a conclusion supported by the most recent editor, Paul Gautier.[15] The manuscripts of other works attributed to Psellos in the *De opinationibus* have yet to be traced and Allatios' letters is the only place where they are preserved. More recent publications have reproduced accounts from the version preserved in Allatios' text and his work on cataloguing and annotating the manuscripts of Psellos has been widely recognised in modern research.[16]

Psellos may have been interested in arcane matters but he, like Allatios, does not represent the popular viewpoint. A different attitude towards demons is expressed in the two exorcisms of the *gello* that Allatios transcribes.[17] These exorcisms are only known from Allatios' transcriptions in the *De opinationibus*, although Greenfield notes that the second of the two is very close to a manuscript in the Bodleian library.[18] However, unlike the histories or saints' lives, the exorcisms do not give a context for the performance of the rite and do not describe the beliefs in action.

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[14] Allatios, *De opin.* IX, p. 138; X, pp. 140–41; XX, p. 162.

[15] Leo Allatios, *De Psellis et eorum scriptis diatriba, PG* 122, cols. 484–522; see esp. cols. 484; 522; Paul Gautier (ed.), 'Le *De Daemonibus* du Pseudo-Psellos', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 38 (1980), 128 ff.

[16] For example K. Sathas reproduces the account of the *babutzikarios* from Allatios' text. See 'Τί ἐστὶ Βαβουτζικάριος' in his *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Paris, 1876), vol. 5, p. 570. On Allatios' contribution to studies of Psellos see for example, Michael Psellos, *The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius*, ed. and trans. Andrew R. Dyck (Vienna, 1986), pp. 25–26: "Allatius was no conjectural critic, so that good readings reported by him carry a presumption of authenticity."

[17] On the differences between official and popular approaches to demons see Richard P.H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam, 1988), esp. pp. 153; 162–78.

[18] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 85–86. For the text of this exorcism see 86–88.

Orthodox Sources on Popular Practices from the Ottoman Period

Allatios' Greek Ottoman sources are taken from a narrower range of genres, being drawn from *nomokanones* (texts compiled from civil and ecclesiastical law), two histories and an account of the state of the Greek church. The scope of their subject matter is also very limited — all except one of these extracts relates to the revenant. As with the Byzantine sources, each of the genres from the Ottoman period approaches popular religion from a different angle. The *nomokanones* show the church attempting to deal with and reform popular practice. Of all the Byzantine sources, they reveal an attitude closest to the regulatory approach of the Catholic church towards popular practices, but they must not merely be seen as prescriptive legal codes. They tap into the sources and traditions governing private confession and penance and differ from law codes both in the breadth of topics covered and in the attitude to the transgressor. The accused is approached from an ecclesiastical point of view and the 'spiritual medicine' of penance rather than civil punishment is administered. Two histories, both attributed to Manuel Malaxos, a sixteenth-century historian and canonist, provide Allatios with examples of the way popular beliefs were employed to interpret the discovery of the undecomposed body of two ecclesiastics. Finally, the *Enchiridium de statu hodiernorum Graecorum* (1619) (henceforth *Enchiridium*) of Christophoros Angelos, a Greek scholar who fled to the West when he was expelled from Athens as a Spanish spy, lays down the dogma and doctrine of the official Orthodox church, concentrating in particular on those areas where the churches of East and West diverged. Angelos is more interested in the official church than popular practices but again his book allows for an investigation into the mutual dependence of popular and official religion in Orthodoxy. From Angelos, Allatios excerpts an account of the holy fire of Jerusalem and also an example of the ability of Orthodox excommunication to preserve bodies after death. Allatios' text is then used by later editors of Angelos to explain this phenomenon![19]

[19] See the commentary in Christophoros Angelos, *Enchiridium. De statu hodiernorum Graecorum*, ed. Georgius Fehlavius (Leipzig, 1668), ch. 25, pp. 526–55.

Non Orthodox Sources

Allatios also uses non-Orthodox sources to shed light on popular practices. For example, he cites the sixteenth-century *Turcograeciae libri octo* by Martin Crusius (1526–1607), the Lutheran Professor at Tübingen. However, Allatios' non-Orthodox sources are far fewer in number and their presence is often restricted to a mere citation or paraphrase rather than a full quotation. This is fitting for their supporting role — to reveal the similarities or differences between Orthodox and Catholic practices. It is surprising that the majority of western sources that Allatios cites support the Orthodox position he is discussing. The dates of these sources range from the eleventh to the seventeenth century and are concentrated around three themes. The first of these is healing. After discussing the Orthodox sources, he paraphrases examples of healing miracles from the *Dialogi* of Desiderius, Abbot of Montecassino, later to become Pope Victor III (1086–87), and from the *Chronicle of Montecassino* by the eleventh-century bishop of Ostia, Leo, also known as Leo Marsicanus. More recent western authors, including the Jesuit theologian Gretser (1562–1625) and the early modern canonist Stephanus Durand are cited in corroboration. The same method is followed in the final section on the *stoicheion*. The Orthodox and classical sources are supplemented with western examples from Picardus' edition of William of Newburgh (a chronicler of medieval England), from a book by the antiquarian Julius Caesar Scaliger, and works from Allatios' friend and editor Nihusius. In the final section of the text on the holy fire of Jerusalem, western writers are in the majority for the first time, as Allatios draws on accounts of western pilgrims to the Holy Land, consulting the works of the twelfth-century chroniclers William of Malmesbury and Burchard von Ursberg (whom Allatios calls Urspurgensis).

Paradoxically the only sources Allatios selects which are openly hostile to the Orthodox tradition come from works by converts to Catholicism. One is the *Adversos Graecos* of Manuel Kalekas, a late fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar, who ridicules the Orthodox beliefs surrounding bodies that fail to decompose. The other is from Petrus Arcudius (c. 1563–1633), a Corfiote acquaintance of Allatios and fellow convert from Orthodoxy who dismisses the arrival of the holy fire at Easter as trickery.[20]

[20] For details of Arcudius' life see Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique, ou, Description*

This brief overview reveals the importance of Byzantine source material for Allatios' letter. Although he cites around sixty works, the vast majority date from the Byzantine or Late Antique period. Moreover, his range of Byzantine texts is far more extensive and varied in content and theme than his early modern or western sources. His interest in Byzantine authors is demonstrated by the number of works he produced which relate to them. But if Byzantine manuscripts were important for Allatios' scholarly career, his work in turn was vital for the future of Byzantine studies. His printed books and even his manuscript annotations are still acknowledged by modern scholars. For us the *De opinationibus* may be a convenient collection of sources relating to popular religion, but the pioneering nature of his scholarship must not be forgotten. Some of the texts Allatios discusses existed only in manuscript form and his letter not only airs them in print for the first time but also makes them accessible to a wider audience by providing a Latin translation. Even today the *De opinationibus* preserves sources which have not been traced or have not appeared in print elsewhere. Allatios has been justly hailed as an 'early Byzantinist' and one of the reasons why he is so useful for an investigation into popular religion is his detailed knowledge of the Byzantine sources which pertain to this subject.[21]

Other Sources for the Investigation of Popular Orthodoxy in the Early Modern Period

The section above reveals the importance of Byzantine sources in Allatios' work on the popular religion of the Greeks of his own day. Classical beliefs and practices are largely excluded, except where they indicate the antiquity of a modern practice. The implication is that Allatios has divided the history of the Greek lands into two periods, the classical period, which was pagan, and the Christian period, which stretched from the time of the early church until his own day. For Allatios there is a continuity that runs through Orthodox his-

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raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au 17e siècle (Paris, 1895), vol. 3, pp. 209–220. See also the entry under his name in Leo Allatios, *Apes urbanae, sive De viris illustribus qui ab anno MDCXXX per totum MDCXXXII Romae adfuerunt* (Hamburg, 1711), pp. 306–308.

[21] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 160 ff.

tory and there is no hiatus with the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453: his own experiences and the oral testimonies of his contemporaries can be placed alongside Byzantine textual sources and reveal the unbroken tradition. Allatios' conviction of the historical continuity of the Orthodox church plays a vital role in his assessment of its validity but his assumptions should be treated with care: although the fundamentals of Orthodoxy may stay the same, the manifestation and context of popular beliefs and practices change over time. It is therefore useful to place the contents of *De opinationibus* alongside evidence from other sources. However, unlike the West, where the Catholic and Protestant churches devoted themselves to the reform of popular religion, there are no official Orthodox writings dedicated to the purification of popular religion, nor are there rich inquisitorial archives. Nevertheless, in the early modern period new sources do appear, generated by the changing situation. With its assumption of social jurisdiction over the Greek community following the fall of Constantinople, the Orthodox church assumed greater responsibility for the laity, adding impetus to a trend which dated back to the fourteenth century. This development is reflected in the *nomokanones* from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which pay more attention to popular beliefs and practices than the earlier versions. Non-Orthodox sources too show a greater interest in Orthodox practices. In the aftermath of the Reformation, Western Europe expressed a new interest in the Orthodox church and people, and this is manifested in mission reports, travellers' tales and in accounts of the state of the Greek church.

Nomokanones

The most widely used *nomokanon* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the *Nomokanon* of Malaxos (1561), attributed to the sixteenth-century historian and canonist of the same name.[22] Together with the fourteenth-century *Hexabiblos* of Harmenopoulos it was a major source of law for the Orthodox community during the Ottoman

[22] In fact it was not written by the scriptor of this name, but his cousin Nicholas Malaxos, and the priest Zacharios Skordylios. See Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 210; Demetrios B. Oikonomides, '«Χρονογράφου» τοῦ Δωροθέου τὰ λαογραφικὰ', *Λαογραφία* 18 (1959), 116–24.

period.[23] However, *nomokanones* also fit into a tradition of spiritual guidance. Malaxos attributes particular sections of his work to a certain John the Faster to whom the introduction of a more lenient penitential system has been attributed.[24] The penance and confession John advocated were private rather than public and assumed a personal relationship between the confessor and the spiritual father: Christians had to confess their transgressions and the priest should encourage his spiritual children to do so and lead them away from sin.[25] The *nomokanones* of both John the Faster and Malaxos guide the priest in his duty and contain information not only about the path away from sin, but the sin itself. Wishing to combat a certain practice, the church provides a description in order that the confessor might recognise it and take the appropriate action. The *nomokanones* form a meeting point between the laity and the church and therefore can be extremely useful as a source for beliefs of the laity.

Unfortunately these sources have their limitations. The way they are constructed, by compiling information from earlier legal codes or by copying from existing *nomokanones*, makes it difficult to establish from the text whether the information is relevant to the seventeenth century. Again, as a source of normative prescriptions, *nomokanones* set out to eradicate or change lay belief. To what extent can their description of aberrant behaviour be trusted? How far did their authors have knowledge of the beliefs and practices described in the texts? Finally, it must be remembered that the amount and type of information is not necessarily indicative of the intensity of the lay belief itself, but of the church's concern over this behaviour. If these points are borne in mind, however, *nomokanones* can be extremely useful sources.

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[23] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 71.

[24] Pseudo John the Faster, or John IV Nesteutes, patriarch of Constantinople (582–595) supposedly composed a number of *nomokanones* and penitentials. This attribution is spurious, as even the earliest of the works dates from the end of the ninth century. The penitential is contained in Migne: *Consequentia et ordo erga eos qui peccata confitentur*, *PG* 88, cols. 1889–918.

[25] For discussions of the penitential of Pseudo John the Faster see J.H. Erickson, 'Penitential Discipline in the Orthodox Canonical Tradition' *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 21 (1977), 201–204; E. Herman, 'Il più antico penitenziale greco' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19 (1953), 71–127; A. Raes, 'Les Formulaires Grecs du rite de la pénitance' in *Melanges en l'honneur de Monseiur Michel Andrieu* (Strasbourg, 1956), 365–72.

Professions of Faith and Greek Writings on the State of the Church

Other Greek works, such as professions of faith of the patriarchs and accounts of the Orthodox church that were composed for a western audience, provide additional sources for the line taken by the higher churchmen, and offer occasional glimpses of popular practice. The professions of faith are also very useful for revealing the pressure exerted by Protestants and Catholics on the church hierarchy and the way in which western Christian doctrine started to influence the outlook of the Orthodox church during this period.[26] The texts on the Orthodox church which were written by Greeks who had fled to the West can be compared with the publications on the same topic by western authors, such as Paul Rycaut and Thomas Smith. One of the works most consulted by contemporaries was the *Enchiridium* of Christophoros Angelos.[27] As we have seen above, even Leo Allatios includes excerpts from it in his *De opinationibus*. In many ways later writers can be seen to follow the format of the *Enchiridium*, which laid down for a western audience the customs of the Orthodox church and its position on the sacraments. Obviously this text has the advantage of being written by a member of the Orthodox church, and so it is more likely to approach the subject sympathetically. Unfortunately Angelos' discussions are often frustratingly brief, and in the main he is not interested in popular religion.

Demonological Texts

Demonological texts might serve to redress the balance as they contain accounts of practices of which the church did not approve. They outline exorcisms of demons and disease and also provide instruction on positive magical action, such as the production of abortifacients, love potions and methods of divination. When compared to ecclesiastical works, they reveal some underlying differences between official and popular outlook, particularly with respect to the perception of demons and diabolic actions. Richard Greenfield discusses in detail

[26] For further information on this topic see Ware, *Argenti*, pp. 7–16; 137–54.

[27] On Angelos see Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, pp. 113–17, where Legrand reproduces a passage from *Christophoros Angell, A Grecian who tasted of many stripes* in which Angelos describes his harsh treatment at the hands of the Turks. See also vol. 3, p. 208.

the differences between the official and popular approach to demons in the Byzantine material in his *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*. Some of the practices and attitudes he describes continue into the Ottoman period, and a number of early modern works have been printed in Delatte's *Anecdota Atheniensia*.[28] Magical books such as the *Kyranides* and the *Testament of Solomon* remained popular right up to the eighteenth century. However, demonological texts, like *nomokanones*, were copied by successive generations without much alteration and it is difficult to know how widely they were used and how far the rituals they describe represent popular practices. In the Byzantine period it was the educated elite who possessed such works and the lack of a Greek press inside the Ottoman Empire meant that books remained relatively rare and therefore expensive.[29] It is unlikely that the Venetian press produced demonological texts for distribution in Orthodox lands. Moreover, many treatises on demons are extremely complicated and require more than a basic level of literacy. It is difficult to know whether those who used them were versed in the systems of demonology implicit in the texts or merely saw in the rituals another way to manipulate their surroundings. The absence of a social context for the sources makes it difficult to know how far the beliefs interacted with daily life, by whom they were used, and in what circumstances. Moreover, the distinction between text and practice, often made with respect to normative ecclesiastical texts, applies equally to prescriptive works on demonology. Nevertheless, demonological works will be consulted in this study where appropriate.

Western Travellers' Tales

In contrast to demonological texts, travellers' tales describe the practice of popular religion. Although the quality of observation varies, there is no shortage of works to choose from. During the seventeenth century the number of westerners travelling through the Balkans increased. The importance of trade with the Ottoman Empire had

[28] A. Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1927).

[29] For example Miklosich, *Acta*, vol. I, p. 543. Greenfield views the educated status of the magician as a feature of Byzantine magic. Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 251; Richard P.H. Greenfield, 'A Contribution to the Study of Palaeologan Magic' in Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, pp. 151–52, see esp. n. 112.

led to the development of trading enclaves and ambassadorial and consulate posts and swelled the ranks of westerners living in Ottoman lands.[30] Travel remained a dangerous business but the western settlements provided a base for travellers and the knowledge and contacts of the expatriates facilitated journeys through unfamiliar and hostile territory. Accounts composed on the basis of these journeys stimulated interest in the East, encouraging others to emulate the experience. Along with these transitory travellers, the more permanent inhabitants — consuls, ambassadors, chaplains, merchants and missionaries — composed histories, accounts of manners and customs, and reports, contributing to a deeper knowledge of the land and its inhabitants. Other aspects of western life also encouraged an interest in the Greeks. The classical education of the travellers aroused curiosity about the Greece of bygone days, while the contemporary ecclesiastical situation directed attention towards the Orthodox church. Following the Reformation, both Protestant and Catholic churches were interested in securing a union with the Orthodox church. Some travellers engaged with and reported debates about current issues such as transubstantiation and purgatory.

Historians have often been criticised for using western travel accounts to investigate the Ottoman Empire. Travellers' prejudices and their failure to understand the culture they described have led to mistakes, which have then been reproduced by western historians relying on their work.[31] The danger of using these sources is that a view of the Greeks is constructed which is based solely on western understanding. It has been filtered through the interpretations of earlier sources, maintaining earlier viewpoints and perpetuating fallacies, creating an imaginary construct of the Greek land and people.[32]

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[30] Goffman, *Ottoman Empire*, ch. 7; for an account of British merchant activity see Goffman, *Britons*.

[31] Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 'Introduction' in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, *The Central Lands* (London, 1982), p. 15.

[32] For the construction of the idea of Greece see Margaret Alexiou, 'Modern Greek Studies in the West: between the Classics and the Orient', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1986), 5; 12 n. 5; Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, p. 4 et passim; on the role of travel accounts in creating a framework through which a culture is viewed see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1995), p. 67; Maria Todorova discusses the role of travellers' tales in the development of the idea of the Balkans, but argues that this does not really occur until the late eighteenth century: *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 19; 62–88.

In the travel accounts, the Greek people and later the Greek lands of the Ottoman Empire were often approached in terms of western expectations, which were encouraged by a classical education, Christian scholarship, and earlier travel writings. Often travellers saw a link to the ancient Greece with which they were so familiar in the beliefs of the people they came across. At times the botanist Tournefort regarded the Greeks of his own time as living texts, reproducing exactly the approaches and ideas of their ancestors:

> I regarded the Brain of these poor Greeks, as so many living Inscriptions, serving to retain the Names quoted by Theophrastus and Dioscorides; these, though subject to diverse Alterations, will doubtless last much longer than most solid Marble, because they are every day renew'd, whereas Marble wears off, or is destroy'd.[33]

The people were considered as simple and unchanging, preserving traditions of the classical period more faithfully than material culture. In the eighteenth century too, the merchant and antiquarian Pierre Augustin Guys read the modern Greeks as living commentaries on the ancient texts.[34] Like Tournefort, he emphasises the continuity with the distant past not only in knowledge but also in manner and character. He is so steeped in the works of the past that he not only interprets what he sees in terms of classical and early church writers, but also describes his experience through their words.[35] This of course makes much of his book extremely difficult to use, as it is impossible to know to what extent his frame of reference is distorting his experience.

While Guys' approach, which posits a continuity with the glory that was ancient Greece, casts a largely positive light on his Orthodox contemporaries, others were highly critical of the inhabitants of the Balkans: the Greeks did not live up to the promise of their ancestors. The Anglican chaplain, Thomas Smith, was extremely harsh

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[33] Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, *A Voyage into the Levant: Perform'd by the Command of the Late French King*, trans. John Ozell (London, 1718), vol. 2, p. 68. See also P. Augustus Guys, *Sentimental Journey through Greece in a Series of Letters Written from Constantinople* (Dublin, 1823), vol. 1, p. 146: "it is among the common people I always look for ancient manners. Those refine but little, and are ever tenacious of the traditions handed down to them by their forefathers, and are so much attached to their customs, that they bear with them the force of so many ancient laws."

[34] On the travels of Guys see David Constantine, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge, 1984), ch. 7.

[35] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 146.

in his judgement, especially regarding the state of learning and literacy and its effect on the church. Along with readiness to criticise, the possibility of misunderstandings must also be taken into account. Immersed in their own culture, travellers could easily fail to understand the alien beliefs and practices they encountered. Certainly, some reacted to the unfamiliar ways as though they were a contagious disease and avoided discussing them or treated them with the utmost hostility.

The travellers' tales themselves began to form a framework within which to understand the experience of Greece. Authors started to quote excerpts from their predecessors in order to enlarge upon their own experiences, or to fill gaps they discerned in their itinerary. Cornelis du Bruyn always carried with him the books of Thevenot, Valle and Olfort Dapper to help him find sites and to aid his memory. He borrowed descriptions from these authors to make his own text more complete and in the front of his book he reproduced letters from numerous authors testifying that his account of Greece was correct.[36] In other words, a standard for the 'Greek experience' began to be laid down, and the encounters of individuals were moulded to fit the existing framework of knowledge.

However, when all these issues are taken into account, travellers' tales remain the only sources which describe popular religion 'in action'. Where Orthodox sources take any interest in popular religion, they often proscribe and reinterpret the belief. The discussion takes place within normative texts and presents a standardised view of popular religion. Fortunately, there are travel accounts which manage to avoid some of the pitfalls discussed above. Some long-term residents developed a deep knowledge of customs and practices. Paul Rycaut, the English consul at Smyrna (1667–1678), composed a very sympathetic and observant description of Greek religion in *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*. It is greatly enhanced by his profound concern for religious tolerance which rose out of his own background. His immediate family contained members of the Dutch, French and Italian reformed churches.[37] He also brings

[36] Cornelis du Bruyn, *Voyage au Levant, c'est-à-dire, dans les principaux endroits de l'Asie mineure, dans les isles de Chio, Rhodes et Chypre etc.* (Paris, 1714), p. 3.

[37] Sonia P. Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667–1678* (Oxford, 1989), p. 20.

to his work the knowledge gained from spending an extended time in the Ottoman Empire. As well as living for over ten years in Smyrna, he travelled widely in the Balkans, and was on good terms with numerous ecclesiastics. For all these reasons, his work is a valuable source for the state of the Greek church in the seventeenth century.

Many missionaries from the West also spent long periods of time in different areas of the Ottoman Empire and were intimately acquainted with the local population. This should have placed them in an excellent position to report on popular religion. However, mission reports from the Aegean, like those from Italy, stress the non-Christian nature of the beliefs of the inhabitants, a *topos* which throws the work of the mission into dramatic relief rather than accurately reporting on the situation.[38] Unfortunately, most of the letters detailing their progress sent back to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the heads of the various orders, were less concerned with the existing religious practices of the inhabitants than the number of potential converts to the Catholic faith. Something of an exception was Father François Richard, a Jesuit missionary on the island of Santorini, who took an interest in the indigenous population and described beliefs and practices in their social context.[39]

Accounts by more transitory travellers can also add to our knowledge of popular customs, in spite of the fact that the authors spent little time in each area and their knowledge of the local community was not particularly deep. Although Tournefort describes the Greek people as 'living inscriptions' because of their retention of botanical names, his careful observations of customs were largely free of classical allusions, and this, combined with his curiosity and tolerance, make his account extremely valuable.[40] Therefore, if travel accounts are interpreted with care, they are an irreplaceable source for popular beliefs, and one which has been much neglected.[41]

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[38] Thomas Charles Fleuriau, *Estat des missions de Grèce, présenté à nos seigneurs les archevesques, evesques et deputez du clergé de France en l'année 1695* (Paris, 1695), pp. 83; 110.

[39] Father François Richard, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable à Sant-Erini, isle de l'Archipel* (Paris, 1657), pp. 208–26.

[40] Constantine, *Travellers*, ch. 2.

[41] Alexiou, 'Folklore', p. 4 n. 7 notes the lack of attention paid to material contained within travellers' tales. For an evaluation of the use of travellers' tales for researching Ottoman history see Faroqhi, *Ottoman History*, ch. 5; Goffman, *Britons*,

Folklore

Recently western historians of popular culture have turned to folklore to further their research, but there are important differences between Greek and western European collections which militate against the use of folkloric material as a source for this book.[42] Greek folklore archives are extremely rich but the collections were not assembled until the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whereas some western collections date back to the early modern period. As in the West, the interest in folklore was closely associated with the rise of nationalism, and in Greece the main collections began around 1834 with the formation of the new state.[43] It is difficult to assess the effect on the material of the monumental changes which occurred during the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the subsequent rise of an independent Greek state. The academic approach to folklore has compounded the problem. The archaeological and romantic methodology, which aims to link the modern period with a golden age in the distant past, was deeper and more long lasting in Greece than elsewhere and until very recently Greek folklore as a discipline isolated itself from theoretical developments elsewhere in Europe.[44] For historians as much as anthropologists, Greek folklore desperately needs to be re-examined before any attempt can be made to use it for an investigation into popular religion.[45]

Similarly the Cretan poetry that survives from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is also problematic. It is the product of the fertile interaction between Orthodox and Catholic culture in Crete during the period of Venetian rule. Its content and form were influenced by western trends in literature, making it difficult to use as evidence for wider Orthodox popular religion. The argument about "'Greek' versus 'western' origins" may be sterile, as Alexiou suggests, but it is necessary to determine how this unique Cretan culture relates to that of the wider Orthodox community before the material can be used in a more general history of popular Orthodoxy.[46]

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pp. 11–12; Stephane Yerasimos, *Les Voyageurs dans l'Empire Ottoman XIV^e–XVI^e siècles: bibliographie, itinéraires, et inventaire des lieux habités* (Ankara, 1991), pp. 1–90.

[42] Burke, *Popular Culture*, pp. 4–22.

[43] Alexiou, 'Folklore', 3–5.

[44] Ibid., 2; 7–9.

[45] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 6.

[46] Alexiou, 'Charos', p. 226.

In conclusion, Orthodox ecclesiastical literature, demonological texts and western sources can be used alongside the *De opinationibus* for an investigation into Orthodox popular religion. Nevertheless, the *De opinationibus* remains uniquely valuable for both the Byzantine tradition of popular religion and its early modern manifestation. However, Allatios' text is more than the sum of its parts; his own interpretations of the sources are also important. After all, the *De opinationibus* remains the only source in which Orthodox popular practices are described by a participant, albeit one who is somewhat distanced from the tradition. This book will examine how Allatios' careful selection and arrangement of the sources creates the structure of his text, perhaps more so than his often sparse commentary, and conveys his underlying themes — the relationship between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, between medicine and religion and between the natural and spiritual worlds. But before the value of his analysis and his own perspective can be assessed, it is necessary to consider the influences on his life and work in order to discover the impact these had on his attitudes to popular religion, and on the construction and presentation of his memories. This forms the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

LEO ALLATIOS: HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCES

Biography

Leo Allatios was born c. 1586 in Chios Town to Niccolas Allatzes and Sebaste Neurides.[1] Both parents were Greek, but although his father was from an Orthodox family it is unclear whether his mother was Orthodox or Catholic. Certainly her brother Michael Neurides became a Jesuit but we cannot tell whether he was born into a Catholic family or converted later in life.[2] This gives rise to the much discussed problem of Allatios' own confessional status. Amantos in 1935 and more recently Papadopoulos have argued over his Orthodoxy.[3] His private profession of the Catholic faith, however, indicates where his loyalties lay, and it is most likely that he was baptised as an Orthodox and later converted to Catholicism. The difficulty in establishing the faith of Allatios and his family arises partly from the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholics on Chios. Allatios himself noted that the Orthodox and Latins frequently intermarried and also attended services indiscriminately in the different churches.[4] On many Aegean islands, including Chios, the distinction

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[1] Stephanus Gradi, *Leonis Allatii Vita* in Mai, *Novae patrum bibliothecae*, vol. 6, pt. 2, ch. 2, pp. v–vi. Allatios signed his name Leo Allatius in Latin, and Leone Allacci in Italian. There is some dispute over the exact date of his birth but he was born sometime between 1586 and 1588. I have followed the date suggested by Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 234 nn. 1–2.

[2] Charles A. Frazee, 'Leon Allatios, A Greek Scholar of the Seventeenth Century', *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 1 (1985), 64; 66 argues that both parents were Orthodox, but that Allatios made a private profession of faith some time before 1606; Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 234 also argues that both parents were Orthodox, but see his discussion pp. 234–35 n. 2 where he concentrates on evidence for the paternal side of the family, and dismisses the evidence put forward for the Orthodoxy of Allatios' mother's family.

[3] I. Thomas Papadopoulos, ''Ο Λέων 'Αλλάτιος καὶ ἡ Χίος', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 20 (1989), 13–15; K.I. Amantos, 'Λέων 'Αλλάτιος' in *Εἰς μνήμην Σπ. Λάμπρου* (Athens, 1935), pp. 556–57.

[4] *De Ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione, libri tres* (Cologne [Amsterdam?], 1648; facsimile reprint, Farnborough, 1970), cols. 979–80. Kallistos

between Catholic and Orthodox was not as significant to the inhabitants as it is today. On Chios this situation only changed with the Venetian invasion of 1694, when relations between the Orthodox and Catholics deteriorated sharply.[5]

Allatios attended the Catholic school on the island run by his uncle, Michael Neurides, where he displayed such aptitude that he was allowed to teach the younger boys.[6] This school can probably be identified as the Jesuit establishment founded under Clement VII (1523–34) which was housed in the church of Saint Anthony.[7] Neurides had been sent out as a teacher to the school in Chios after spending ten years at the Greek College at Rome.[8] In 1596, when Neurides was recalled to Rome, he offered to take his nine-year-old nephew with him, promising to enrol him at his old college. Allatios' parents agreed and uncle and nephew embarked on the long and difficult sea voyage to Messina.[9]

At nine Allatios was still too young to enrol at the college and he spent two years in the care of a family at Messina, and then a further year in Naples, where he improved his Latin.[10] When he reached thirteen he entered St Athanasius', the Greek College at Rome, which had been set up in 1576 by Gregory XIII (1572–85) to further the aims of church union. The Catholicising tendencies of the school were well known and many students, such as the future patriarch of Constantinople Kyril Loukaris, who wished to retain their faith, entered the University at Padua rather than the College at Rome.[11] At one point, pupils of St Athanasius' were forced to take

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Ware, 'Orthodox and Catholics in the Seventeenth Century: Schism or Intercommunion', *Studies in Church History* 9 (1972), 263.

[5] Philip P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Venetians (1694): Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Official Dispatches* (London, 1935), pp. xc–xci.

[6] Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 148.

[7] Philip P. Argenti, *Diplomatic Archive of Chios, 1577–1841* (Cambridge, 1954), vol. 1, p. 16. Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 148; for the church see also Charalambos Bouras, ''Η ἀρχιτεκτονικὴ τῶν Γενουατικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς πόλεως Χίου', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 18 (1987), 14; Amantos, 'Λέων Ἀλλάτιος', p. 558.

[8] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 4, p. vii; J. Krajcar, 'The Greek College under the Jesuits for the First Time (1591–1604)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 31 (1965), 109–110.

[9] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 4, p. vii; Markos N. Roussos-Milidonis, ''Ιησουΐτες στὴ Χίο (1594–1773)', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 21 (1991), 48.

[10] Gradi, *Vita*, chs. 5–6, p. vii.

[11] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 11, p. x; Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 261; Nikos M. Stoupakis, *Γεώργιος Κορέσσιος (1570ci–1689/60). Ἡ ζωή, τὸ ἔργο του καὶ οἱ πνευματικοί ἀγῶνες τῆς ἐποχῆς του* (Chios, 2000), p. 42.

an oath that they would return to their homeland and preach the 'Greek rite' (that is, the Uniate rite) once they had finished the course.[12] For the majority of the Orthodox faithful, who understood their allegiance to the faith in terms of the liturgy, the Uniate rite disguised the differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism and therefore brought in more converts for the missionaries. Allatios was one of the few who refused to make this promise, declaring that he would worship in the rite that seemed best to him, and return home when he wished. Despite the trouble that this caused, he progressed well at school and graduated eleven years later, defending his thesis in philosophy and theology. Originally he had intended to return to his beloved homeland, but his earlier refusal to take the required oath suggests perhaps that a missionary's life had never appealed to him.[13] The priesthood, however, did retain some attraction, as he remained unmarried so that he might at some future point take holy orders.[14]

Following his graduation, rather than returning to Chios, Allatios joined Bernardo Giustiniani in Anglona.[15] Allatios' biographer, Gradi, stated that he was the vicar general, but according to Frazee it is more likely that he was Giustiniani's minister.[16] Allatios remained in this post for three years, but found it unfulfilling. In 1615 he was offered the opportunity to return to Chios as the vicar general of Bishop Marco Giustiniani Massone, a fellow Chian, who, like Allatios, favoured the Roman rite. Sadly, on reaching Smyrna, Allatios learned of the death of his father and his short stay on Chios would not be an enjoyable one.[17] Not only was it overshadowed by his father's

[12] Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 65–66; Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 238.

[13] Allatios was very proud of his island and wrote a treatise to prove that it was the birthplace of Homer: *De patria Homeri* (Lyons, 1640). On his intention to return after graduating from the college see Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 240.

[14] Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 73.

[15] See Elmar Mittler (ed.), *Bibliotheca Palatina* (Heidelberg, 1986), vol. 2, p. 295 for an image of Allatios receiving his degree.

[16] Cerbu argues that assigning the work to the authorship of Gradi disguises Allatios' role in the writing of the text, and suggests that this and the other works concerning Allatios' life (the *Riccordi* and *Elogium*) should instead be considered as autobiography. Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 29. This was first discussed in Cyril Korolevskij, 'Les premiers temps de l'histoire du College Grec de Rome', *Stoudion* 3 (1926), 87–88. Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 11, p. x. Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 66; Argenti, *Minorities*, pp. 240–41.

[17] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 16, p. xii.

death, but it was also marred by violent disputes within the Catholic community.[18]

There were social and confessional tensions amongst the Catholics on Chios. The Mahonesi were descendants of the Genoese rulers of the island, and, following the Turkish conquest in 1566, they continued to exert their authority through the various institutions allowed to Chios under the Privileges granted to the island by the sultan.[19] Their highhandedness often resulted in friction with the Borghesi party, which was made up of the remaining Catholic citizens. When the Turks seized the church of the Catholic Fraternity of the Disciplinati, leaving the community without a place of worship, the bishop allocated the church of Hagios Georgios Serapios to them, although it was a Greek church for which the Mahonesi had the right of presentation. As a compromise the bishop ruled that the allotment of the church to the Disciplinati rested on the condition that the heads of the fraternity would, from now on, be drawn from the Mahonesi alone.[20] This issue was further complicated by the fact that Bishop Giustiniani Massone came from a Mahonesi family, and therefore was not viewed as an impartial judge.

Furthermore, this action also enraged the Orthodox community. The Orthodox priest who administered the church was furious at the confiscation, but unable to prevent it. In such circumstances the Catholic bishop was extremely powerful, and this event reveals the disadvantage at which the Orthodox could find themselves.[21] In spite of this, the most serious problems which arose from the re-allotment did not come from the Orthodox community and during Allatios' stay on Chios the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches was generally good. Indeed, there are reports of services where the Catholic bishop performed the liturgy in Orthodox churches, aided by Orthodox attendants. Allatios reports that they shared feast

[18] The discussion below follows Gradi, *Vita*, chs. 21–26, pp. xiv–xvii.

[19] For the documents relating to the privileges see Philip P. Argenti, *Chius Vincta: or, The Occupation of Chios by the Turks (1566) and their Administration of the Island (1566–1912): Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Official Dispatches* (Cambridge, 1941), pp. 208–27, esp. pp. 217–21; and his commentary on this pp. clxxiii, clxxix–clxxxiii.

[20] Argenti, *Minorities*, pp. 242–43.

[21] Argenti, *Diplomatic Archive*, vol. 2, pp. 836–38.

days and that the Latin bishop, Massone, even celebrated the liturgy at the altar of the Orthodox monastery, Nea Moni.[22]

No such harmony existed within the Catholic community and the bishop's ruling exacerbated the existing tensions between the different Catholic factions. The bishop's own Mahonesi background threw suspicion of favouritism on his decision. Consequently, the Borghesi refused to give up their claims and withheld the property of the fraternity in spite of the bishop's threat of excommunication. The Jesuits then entered the fray. Even though the fraternity was a Dominican concern, the Jesuits used their autonomous tribunal to excommunicate the Mahonesi leader in retaliation.[23]

The independence of the missionary orders, which meant they could resist the authority of the bishop, also caused problems for Allatios and Bishop Massone. Not only did the Jesuits have independent tribunals, but they and the other citizens had the right to appeal to Rome against the decision of the bishop. This state of affairs made it extremely difficult for Massone and his vicar general to solve the local disputes within the Catholic church. The Jesuit intervention in the above dispute was characteristic of their behaviour. Nor was it the only matter in which they were involved. They were engaged in a long-running dispute with the Franciscan Observants over a legacy that had been left first to the Franciscans and then to the Jesuits. The interest on the amount was left to a relative of the deceased, Rafaelle Schiattino, who was a clerk in minor orders and supported by the Jesuit party. He was called before Allatios, who was anxious to bring the issue to a close. Unfortunately the discussion did not go well and ended in the excommunication of Schiattino. Again, the Jesuits retaliated, citing Allatios and the bishop before the court.[24] An appeal to Rome upheld the Jesuit position, forcing Massone and Allatios to defend themselves at the Congregation for Regulars.[25] Having spent less than a year in Chios, Allatios returned to Rome with his bishop to make their case, which they finally won in 1616.

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[22] Allatios, *De consens.*, 3.9, cols. 1062–90. Charles A. Frazee, 'The *De ecclesiae* of Leon Allatios — A Church History of the Seventeenth Century', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 29 (1984), 61.

[23] Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 246.

[24] Ibid., pp. 243–44.

[25] Gradi, *Vita*, chs. 24–25, pp. xvi–xvii. Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 251.

Although Massone returned to his position, the unpleasant atmosphere had persuaded Allatios against pursuing an ecclesiastical career in his homeland. He never again returned to Chios.[26]

This perhaps was not Allatios' intention when he returned to Rome. While the case was being heard, he took up medical studies and according to one source he intended to use his skills as a physician to aid his fellow countrymen.[27] However, once he had completed his degree he decided to remain in Italy.[28] He began his studies under Iulio Caesare Lagalla at Sapienza in Rome and graduated in record time six months later, gaining a certificate which allowed him to teach as well as to practise.[29] In the event he did neither, growing disillusioned with medical practice, but he remained in contact with many from the medical circle.

Instead of continuing with medicine, in 1618 he was given a position as a scriptor at the Vatican Library to arrange the manuscript collection of the Greek codices.[30] This appointment followed the decision by Paul V (1605–1621) to separate the manuscript archives from the rest of the library and Allatios was employed in cataloguing the collection.[31] At this time he was also given the position of professor of rhetoric at the Greek College by Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani, his former teacher.[32] He did not remain there long as he fell out with Ioannis Mattheos Karyophillis (1556–1633), bishop of Crete and a fellow teacher. By leaving the post Allatios also caused a rift between himself and Maffeo Barberini, Protector of the College. Moreover, this problem came on top of an earlier falling out of the pair. As a student, Allatios had criticised the Greek poetry of his teacher.[33] Maffeo Barberini was not only extremely proud of his poetry but

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[26] I. Thomas Papadopoulos, 'Οἰκογενειακὰ τοῦ Λέοντος 'Αλλατίου', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 18 (1987), 20. Although Allatios continued to correspond with his friends on Chios, he lost touch with his mother after she remarried. The above article reproduces a letter of Allatios' mother in which she remonstrates with her son for failing to keep in contact, p. 23 ff.

[27] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 27, p. xvii; Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 66.

[28] Papadopoulos, 'Οἰκογενειακὰ', 19, n. 1; Papadopoulos, 'Λέων 'Αλλάτιος', 19.

[29] The text of the medical degree is reproduced in Argenti, *Minorities*, pp. 447–50.

[30] Bignami, *Bibliothèque Vaticane*, p. 105.

[31] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 31, p. xx.

[32] Ibid., ch. 32, p. xx.

[33] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 34, p. xxi; Frederick Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (London, 1994), pp. 19–20. For Urban's poetry see his volumes of *Poemata*, published in Rome from 1620 onwards.

was reputed to have a vile temper. Allatios was later to regret crossing him.[34] What seemed like Allatios' great opportunity came in 1621. In return for the papal contributions to the Catholic League in Germany, Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, resolved to send the Palatine Library to the Vatican.[35] On the recommendations of Nicola Alemanni, his former teacher and curator of the Vatican Library, and Cardinal Scipio Cobellucci, Prefect of the Library, Allatios was chosen for the task over more senior scriptors.[36] He set out in 1622 to begin the mammoth task of supervising the packing and transportation of the books.[37] In return for his labours he was promised a canonry, but unfortunately Gregory XV (1621–23), who had commissioned the move, died some months before Allatios' return, and Allatios' adversary Maffeo Barberini was appointed Pope Urban VIII in 1623.[38] Not only did Allatios fail to receive due reward, but this job nearly brought the wrath of the papacy upon him. The scriptors Gaspar Schoppe and William Seton, slighted by his appointment, seized their chance to even the score and claimed that Allatios had stolen some of the texts.[39] Although some books were found to be missing, their whereabouts could all be accounted for and Allatios eventually managed to clear his name.[40]

Despite these problems, Allatios, 'a young and brilliant scriptor' continued his work at the Vatican Library, where he was to make an enormous contribution to the cataloguing and reorganisation of manuscripts under the custodianship of Felice Contelori, head scriptor 1626–30.[41] Allatios was extremely meticulous and his work compares favourably to that of Contelori himself.[42] Although the job required Allatios to reassess the earlier catalogue, the greatest part

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[34] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 34, pp. xxi–xxii.

[35] Ibid., ch. 35, p. xxii. For further information on this task see J. Curzio Mazzi, *Leone Allacci e la Palatina di Heidelburg* (Bologna, 1893); Giovanni Beltrani, 'Relazioni sul trasporto della Biblioteca Palatina da Heidelberg a Roma, scritta da Leone Allaccii ed ora per la prima volta pubblicata', *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* 31–32 (1872), 5–31.

[36] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 36, p. xxii.

[37] For the instructions to Allatios see Mittler, *Bibliotheca*, vol. 1, pp. 462–65 and for a note of his register of the books he moved, p. 476.

[38] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 42, p. xxvi.

[39] Ibid., ch. 43, p. xxvi.

[40] Ibid., ch. 45, p. xxvii. The text ends in 1626 with Contelori's appointment as director of the archive.

[41] Bignami, *Bibliothèque Vaticane*, p. 110; Paul Canart, *Vaticani Graeci*, p. 6.

[42] Canart, *Vaticani Graeci*, pp. 3–4; 7.

of his time was spent integrating other collections and individual manuscripts into the Vatican archives, notably manuscripts from the Greek College, the Lollianini collection and, after 1622, the Palatine Library. Allatios' work was interrupted in 1632, when Orazio Giustiniani succeeded to the post of head scriptor (1630–40), and, according to Gradi, this man's jealousy led him to restrict Allatios to the duties of copyist.[43] Allatios' work on the catalogue resumed in 1640 after the appointment of Annibale Albani.[44] In 1655, when Allatios was finally given the post of deputy curator, the 'reign of Allatios' began.[45] Finally, in 1661 he achieved the position of head curator, which he held until his death eight years later. During these years he continued his cataloguing work and the fruit of his labours was a three volume inventory of the Greek manuscripts of the Vatican, completed and bound during the papacy of Clement IX (1667–69).[46]

Employment as a scriptor gave Allatios access to the works in the Vatican Library, a factor which proved vital for the development of his literary career. It was under the patronage of Bishop, later Cardinal, Lelio Biscia, that Allatios' literary talents began to receive recognition. Although he was passed over for promotion to head scriptor in 1632 and 1636, Biscia recognised his potential and invited him to become curator of his own excellent library, and, in addition, gave him a position as his personal theologian.[47] It was for Biscia that Allatios wrote his first work concerned with the Greek church and he remained under Biscia's wing until the cardinal died in 1635.[48] Then Allatios moved to become curator of the Barberini Library, which brought him into the circle of Francesco Barberini, nephew of Urban VIII (1623–44) and the most influential cardinal in Rome. Francesco was the first cardinal created by his uncle and he held the unofficial but extremely powerful position of 'papal nephew'. From 1626–33 he was also cardinal librarian and in 1632 he became the vice-chancellor of the church. He was the most powerful man in Rome after Urban VIII and controlled all correspondence with the pope himself. Thus, his value as a patron cannot be

[43] Ibid., p. 12.
[44] Bignami, *Bibliothèque Vaticane*, p. 112.
[45] Canart, *Vaticani Graeci*, p. 23.
[46] Ibid., p. 13 n. 62.
[47] Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 46, p. xxvii.
[48] *De aetate et interstitiis in collatione ordinum etiam apud Graecos servandis* (Rome, 1638).

overestimated.[49] Moreover, the Barberini Library was second only to the Vatican Library and Francesco opened it up to scholars, attracting a circle of learned men. The Barberini circle stretched across Europe, with members from Poland, Britain and the Ottoman Empire, as well as France and Italy.[50] The patronage of Biscia and Barberini not only brought with it much needed financial remuneration and access to books, but also introduced Allatios to a wide range of humanists including Jaques Goar, Jean Morin and Gabriel Naudé.

Throughout his career Allatios wrote and published prolifically.[51] There are many volumes of his work in print, but even more material remains unpublished. His first passion was for antiquarian studies. Between 1630 and 1650 he wrote and rewrote the *Summikta*, an edited collection of texts relating to the East, revealing the importance he placed on antiquarian research.[52] He virulently attacked those whom he considered poor practitioners and aimed in his own work to surpass the great sixteenth-century antiquarian, Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609).[53]

His friends increasingly encouraged him to turn his attention to a subject on which he had particular expertise: the Orthodox church.[54] His ecclesiastical works were driven by his ecumenism, probably influenced by his childhood experiences on Chios. His approach is clearly demonstrated in his *De consensione*, where he presents the historical relationship between the churches through extensive quotations from Byzantine texts, arguing that in essence there was no schism between East and West, and the true Orthodox were in communion with the Catholic church.

A work such as the *De consensione* was greatly needed, for the West was ignorant of the development and common history of eastern and

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[49] On Francesco's patronage in the artistic sphere see Hammond, *Music and Spectacle*.

[50] Ibid., p. 28 n. 45.

[51] For Allatios' works see Fernand Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris, 1907), vol. 1.2, cols. 1220–1226, sv 'Allatius'; Carmela Jacono, *Bibliografia di Leone Allacci (1588–1669)* (Palermo, 1962).

[52] The work was originally entitled *Varia Antiqua*. See his *Summikta, sive Opusculorum, Graecorum et Latinorum, vetustiorum ac recentiorum, libri duo* (Cologne, 1653); Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 160 ff.

[53] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 161 ff. Allatios' attack on Scaliger's *Thesaurus Tempus* is the subject of *De Mensura temporum et praecipue Graecorum, exercitatio* (Cologne, 1645). See also *Animadversiones in antiquitatum Etruscarum Fragmenta ab Inghiramio edito* (Paris, 1640), which criticises the antiquarian Curzio Inghirami.

[54] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 170.

western rites. Roman ecclesiastics were highly suspicious of anything which differed from the Roman norm. Even churchmen, like Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro, famous for his interest in eastern Christianity, were wary of divergent rites.[55] For Santoro the solution to the dangerous variations was to impose the Roman rite on the dissidents. This attitude was extremely problematic at the Greek College, for at the same time as asserting the exclusive position of the Roman doctrines and rites, the teachers at the college were anxious to ensure that the future missionaries should be accepted by the Orthodox. Their suspicion of Orthodox rites led to the peculiar situation that existed during Allatios' time at the college. While the Greek calendar and rite were stressed, students were forbidden by the rector Nanni from taking communion after the Greek fashion.[56] This underlying distrust of all things Greek made it difficult to train priests that would be acceptable to the Orthodox church, which was already suspicious of Catholic ambitions. Nanni, again taking the conservative position, refused to allow Greek ordinations. Others, notably Possevino, an expert in oriental problems and one time secretary of the Society of Jesus, recognised that no priest ordained by Latin or Latinophile Greeks would be accepted.[57] Great pains had to be taken to deal with this issue. Possevino suggested that the priest first be ordained by a Latin, and then sent to a friendly Orthodox priest in Greece who would provide the credentials to satisfy the Orthodox.

If ecumenism was to progress, the Catholics had to be persuaded of the common root of Orthodox and Catholic rites. Allatios' efforts in this sphere were not limited to scholarly debates; he was also actively involved in church business. He was a member of the *Accademia Basiliana* set up by Cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1631, a group which sought to reconcile the two churches.[58] In addition he was often consulted by the Congregations of the Holy Office and the Propagation of the Faith, and also by the Index, the Liturgy and

[55] J. Krajcar, 'Cardinal Santoro and the Christian East' in vol. clxxvii of *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome, 1966), p. 10.

[56] Krajcar, 'Greek College', 98.

[57] Ibid., 101–102.

[58] Ibid., 70. See also Legrand, *Bibliographie* (Paris, 1903), vol. 5, pp. 125–30, where he reproduces the *Fasti Academiae Basilianae* written by Joseph Carpano, a member of the group. This was originally printed in Carpano's *In Romana universitate iuris civilis in prima ordinaria sede vespertina professoris emeriti* (Rome, 1682).

the Deputati.[59] Although he was primarily interested in the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, his approach to other churches on the matter of rites was consistent with that described above — he was one of the few who voted to retain the Chinese rite.[60]

Allatios made a great contribution to the ecumenical cause when in 1639 the subject of the legitimacy of the Greek rite was brought up again, this time by the head scriptor of the library, Orazio Giustiniani, who proposed that all Greek liturgical rites at variance with the Latin formula be banned. Allatios argued that this question had been settled at the Council of Florence. To consider banning the rite was an insult to the Church Fathers John Chrysostom and Basil of Caesarea who composed the Liturgies. Moreover, to reject the Greek formulae was to jeopardise the faith and called the episcopal succession into doubt, for the bishops of the early church had been ordained according to the Greek rite.[61] Giustiniani's approach once again revealed the ignorance in the West of the history of the Orthodox church and its relationship with the early Christian churches. Allatios' work, *De libris ecclesiasticis Graecorum* (1646), which details the liturgical books of the Orthodox church, attempted to counter this lack of knowledge and bring about a more enlightened response to Orthodoxy.

Allatios' medical studies do not appear to have greatly influenced the body of his published works. However, it was out of this milieu that his first composition arose: a treatise on the astronomical interests of Lagalla, his medical professor.[62] Later his ties with medical groups weakened as his ecclesiastical work progressed. The extent to which the medical, humanist and ecclesiastical circles were separate, however, can easily be overestimated. It was, after all, Lagalla who introduced Allatios to Biscia.[63] Unfortunately, Allatios' vast network of correspondents still remains hidden. When he died in 1669, still holding the post of head curator, his books and letters passed to the Greek College.[64] They are now held by the Vallicelliana Library in

[59] Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 258; Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 64; 101–102 n. 10.
[60] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 6; 93 n. 93.
[61] Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', p. 71; Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 139 n. 110; 158.
[62] *Iulii Caesaris Lagallae de caelo animato disputatio* (Rome, 1622).
[63] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 131.
[64] Allatios' will is reprinted in Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 3, pp. 447–59.

Rome and have yet to be catalogued. Until this daunting task has been completed, the extent to which his intellectual contacts interacted and provided him with information, introductions and manuscripts will remain unknown.

Intellectual Influences

Allatios' life and work centred around three themes: antiquarianism, ecumenism and, to a lesser extent, medicine. The *De opinationibus*, written in 1645, stood at the intersection of the three. The work itself claims to deal with 'trifles' with which 'some serious things' are mixed on the way and at first sight it is easy to overlook its important connections with current intellectual trends. The sections below examine how the text bears the fruit of Allatios' earlier antiquarian studies, while emphasising the closeness between Orthodox and Catholic churches, and drawing on his interest in the natural world.

Antiquarianism

Although apparent throughout the work, Allatios' antiquarian training is most obvious in his introduction. Antiquarians were devoted to discovering all aspects of the past but were concerned with smaller subjects, collecting information on particular topics rather than applying it to larger historical problems. They usually avoided specifically political subjects, focusing on areas left untouched by the ancient historians. Allatios' discussion of the 'opinions of the Greeks' therefore follows in the antiquarian tradition. However, rather than applying himself to affairs of the distant past, as was usual with antiquarian studies, he states that he will consider the Greeks of his own day. In his introduction he appears to reject the concentration on the distant past, criticising those who desired to gain a reputation for erudition through this kind of work. He argues that if we saw the results of investigations into our own times by future scholars who desired a reputation for erudition (*eruditio*) "we would say not that they were foolish, but plainly stupid because they were recollecting things that were extremely tedious and far removed from the truth."[65]

[65] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 114.

The term '*eruditio*' confirms that Allatios is attacking the focus of the studies of antiquarians.

Allatios advocated a shift in focus to a more recent period rather than completely rejecting antiquarianism. He was passionately interested in studies of the past and pursued this kind of research throughout his life. It is clear that the *De opinationibus* shows the results of his earlier antiquarian activity: one of his main sources for this text is the corpus of work on popular beliefs attributed to Michael Psellos, which Allatios brought to light in a typical antiquarian work, the *De Psellis*.[66] Moreover, through his employment of works by Psellos and Pachymeres, Allatios demonstrated his knowledge of unpublished and unedited material, advertising his antiquarian skills. Therefore when Allatios was critical of antiquarians he censured their choice of subject matter, rather than their methods, castigating those who turned their efforts to "events more distant in time and those which have now long passed away".[67]

Antiquarians traditionally concentrated on the very distant past, particularly the period of classical Greece and Rome, but in the seventeenth century the study of the distant past was attacked from the standpoint of historical Pyrrhonism.[68] Historical Pyrrhonists attacked the antiquarian assumption that the past could be retrieved through a critical analysis of the sources, claiming this was impossible:

> What certainty can we have concerning events of long ago, since we are unsure and without agreement about events which happen in our own time and in front of our own eyes?[69]

Allatios' introduction echoes this concern with respect to the study of antiquity. It is foolish, he argues, to study antiquity, as we can gain no sure knowledge of the past as it truly was, because we approach it through a "superficial conjecture and a distorting lens".[70] He does not, however, take to heart the second criticism put forward by the Pyrrhonists: that even knowledge of our own times is

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[66] Allatios, *De Psellis*, col. 502; 515; 522.

[67] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 114.

[68] Pyrrhonism was the philosophy of Pyrrho of Elis (330 BC) and stated that certainty of knowledge was unattainable.

[69] Charles de La Ruelle, *Succintz adversaires contre l'histoire et professeurs d'icelle* (Poitiers, 1574), p. 16 quoted in George Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History: Historical Erudition and Historical Philosophy in Renaissance France* (London, 1970), p. 165.

[70] Allatios, *De opin.* I, pp. 114–15.

uncertain. Instead he argues that with contemporary events our mind "can make a certain rather than haphazard judgement because it perceives them with its own eyes".[71] Allatios stresses that it is the possibility of obtaining eyewitness accounts which makes the present a better period for research than the past.

He advises that we should study the present not only because we have certain knowledge of it, but also because a wider field of investigation is open to us. The antiquarians who studied the past were hampered by the great works of the ancient Greek and Latin historians and therefore limited their studies to clarifying classical texts and expanding on areas not approached by these writers — the 'trifles' referred to by Allatios. History at this time was not viewed as a matter of pitting one opinion against another, but as a matter of absolute proof.[72] The history of the past had been written, and could not be surpassed. Indeed, Allatios claims that he chose to write on the opinions of the Greeks of his own day, rather than those of the past, because "an obstacle exists in the shape of the works of other famous writers, who have treated these things with great accuracy."[73] Other authors, both ancient and modern, had written on the classical period and therefore the present age offered greater scope for contemporary writers whose talents would be unhindered by great works set in stone.

The focus of antiquarians was also attacked in the debate between ancients and moderns in which it was argued that the present was as worthy of study as the distant past. Allatios writes that events of our time are "in no way more despicable than those ancient ones".[74] Indeed, he argues, we have a duty to study the present before it is condemned, "wrapped in the shadows of silence to be forgotten".[75] In this he alludes to the battle between the ancients and moderns, a common theme in writings of this period.[76] Although the works of

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Huppert, *History*, p. 172, insists that it was considered as absolute as Galileo's observations. It is very odd to juxtapose this with Pyrrhonism. Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950), 291–92, argues that antiquarians turned their attention to salvaging topics ignored by ancient historians.

[73] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 115.

[74] Ibid., I, p. 114.

[75] Ibid.

[76] See Thomas Cerbu, 'The Unpublished Preface to the *Drammaturgia*', *Yearbook*

Tacitus and Livy could not be matched for the study of Ancient Rome, there was no reason why histories of a similar quality could not be written for the modern period; an argument often used to justify the writing of national histories of modern nations. Often the aim of such histories was to establish the independence of the modern nation in all aspects. This was not the case with Allatios, who was not writing a history of Greece, nor attempting to establish the independence of Christian Greece from the ancient period. He does, however, concur with the main point that the modern period is as valid a topic of research as the classical age.[77]

During the seventeenth century there was also a movement away from the position of the Renaissance scholars who had seen history as the 'key to wisdom itself'.[78] History for them had a practical value and could guide men's actions in politics. The sixteenth-century historian La Popelinière still worked within this tradition and for him history was "the most certain philosophy in an uncertain world."[79] In the seventeenth century doubt was cast on the worth of historical studies. Descartes dismissed the discipline altogether, claiming it recorded only local transient events and therefore could not aid mankind to understand events and act in the present.[80] In the face of such criticism, the purpose of history altered. Its aim changed from the direction of the present and the prediction of the future to the discovery of what had actually happened. It was now employed to understand how the current state of affairs had developed.[81] The focus no longer lay strictly on political events and interest extended to the totality of culture, making customs, morals, virtues and vices appropriate areas of study.[82] This subject matter had an advantage over political events. For Allatios, as for other historians

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of Italian Studies 7 (1988), 85, where he notes that Allatios makes this point in the *Drammaturgia*.

[77] Huppert, *History*, p. 20; Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (London, 1970), p. 288; Momigliano, 'Antiquarian', 291; and for the narrowing of the gap between antiquarians and historians in the seventeenth century on subjects other than the classical period, 293–94.

[78] Kelley, *Foundations*, pp. 21–22.

[79] Huppert, *History*, p. 165.

[80] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1993), p. 60; Edmund E. Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy* (London, 1981), p. 12.

[81] Huppert, *History*, p. 47; Collingwood, *History*, p. 66.

[82] Kelley, *Foundations*, p. 11; Huppert, *History*, p. 39.

and antiquarians of the period, customs and morals were products of human nature rather than history and therefore were not subject to change. Unlike events caught in the flux of history, they remained unaltered through time; they were 'always the same'. Allatios continues: "the same thing returns often more intensely".[83] The tension between these two views of history, the cyclical and the constant, continues throughout his work, allowing him access to older historical material while emphasising the importance of eyewitness events.

Ecumenism

Allatios' antiquarianism coloured his approach to the most important focus of his life and work — his ecumenism. In the seventeenth century, antiquarian studies increasingly concentrated on church matters. The expertise of antiquarians, who were often clerics, was directed towards current issues, in particular the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism. Scholars used their skills to investigate the traditions of the church with polemical intent, that is, to demonstrate that their church followed in the true tradition of Christianity as represented by the apostolic churches, and that the religion of their opponents was a 'false' one.[84] This debate directed attention to the 'ideal' of the early church, which was perceived as a community of believers who had lived in harmony, without the strife which had somehow developed during the history of the church. The contrast between church past and present led to an increasing realisation of the development of the church through history. As with the political issues, scholars had to approach the ecclesiastical problems of the day from a historical perspective in order to understand them.[85]

As we have seen above, Allatios approached the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches using the historical approach. Before any hasty decisions were taken concerning the legitimacy of the Orthodox rites, he insisted that the historical development of the two churches should be considered. His investigation in the *De consensione* revealed that not only was the present Greek rite the clos-

[83] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 114.
[84] Bruno Neveu, 'L'érudition ecclésiastique du XVII^e siècle et la nostalgie de l'antiquité chrétienne', *Studies in Church History* 17 (1981), 196.
[85] Ibid.

est to that of the early church but that the interdependence of the two churches, Orthodox and Catholic, ran so deep that to outlaw the Greek rite undermined the apostolic succession of the Catholic church.

Allatios did not understand ecumenism in terms of a mutual movement of the Orthodox and Catholic churches towards a common goal of unity; rather he tried to show that the Orthodox really were just misguided Catholics. His approach should be placed in the context of the papacy's continuing interest in union with the Orthodox church, and this project in turn must be seen against the background of Catholic-Protestant strife. Gregory XIII set up the Greek College in Rome in 1576 in order to aid the process of unification and subsequent popes followed his lead. In 1639 Allatios was one of many scholars called to Rome by Urban VIII to discuss the doctrinal positions of Catholicism and Orthodoxy with a view to the question of Union.[86] The missionaries in the East, co-ordinated by the Propaganda de Fide, pursued the same aim in a more practical way. Their remit was not to convert the Muslims, an action which incurred the death penalty, but the Orthodox. Although bringing the 'true faith' to the laity was important, the conversion of the higher church officials had a greater impact. The Jesuits in particular aimed to convert the church 'from the inside' and several of the patriarchs of this period responded to their efforts, sending professions of faith to the papacy.[87]

The issue of church union was given an added dimension by the struggles within the western church. Westerners turned to the East to gain support for their doctrinal positions. From the declarations of faith that he collected from the Orthodox faithful, the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Nointel, declared that the Orthodox and Catholic churches were at one on the issue of transubstantiation.[88] The Lutherans also approached the Orthodox church, writing to the Patriarch Jeremias II in order to get his support for their doctrines.[89]

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[86] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 139.

[87] Catholicism was attractive to a number of patriarchs including Dionysios (1546–55), Metrophanes III (1565–72; 1579–80), Raphael II (1603–1607), Timothy II (1612–20), and certain patriarchs even sent a submission to the papacy: Gregory IV (Apr.–Jun. 1623), Kyril II (4–11 Oct. 1623; 1635–36; 1638–39), Athanasios III (Feb.–Apr. 1634; Jun. 1652. See Runciman, *Great Church*, pp. 230; 232.

[88] Covel, *Church*, p. iv.

[89] Jeremias II (1572–79; 1580–84; 1586–95). See Constantine Tsirpanlis, *The Historical and Ecumenical Significance of Jeremiah II's Correspondence with the Lutherans* (New

Even the Anglicans joined in the race. The English editor of a work on the Greek church written by the archbishop of Samos, Georgirenes, commented:

> Yet this cannot be deny'd them, but that they accord with us in many things wherein we differ from the Romish Church. I may add this more, that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Greek Church doth not bear that conformity or similitude with the Romish Church, as the great Champions for Popery would affix upon them.[90]

As these examples show, the focus of discussion was predominantly points of doctrine on which the two western churches differed.

The western churches were not impelled to approach Orthodoxy merely out of a desire to boost the numbers of their adherents; more important was the sense of its connection to the early church. Rycaut wrote that the ancient Greek church had the blessing of the Apostles and produced so many Christians that 'Greek' and 'Christian' almost became synonymous.[91] Fleuriau, the Jesuit missionary, also mentions the former glory of the Greek church.[92] The early church had a huge emotional pull for the writers and travellers of the period. Travellers focused on the sites of the seven apostolic churches, and were filled with awe, conscious of treading on land hallowed by contact with the saints.[93] The desire to recover the simplicity and unity of the early church was one of the themes running through the ecclesiastical writings of this period. The disunity and strife in the church of their own day made them long for the perceived harmony of the

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York, 1982), vol. 1. On this point see also Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem Sometimes Called the Council of Bethlehem Holden under Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1672*, ed. and trans. J.N.W.B. Robertson (London, 1899), p. 6: "there are now reaching us from France (how we would we had not heard them!) rumblings. For the Calvinists that are there found, gratuitously indulging in wickedness, say that our Apostolic and Holy Church, the Eastern to wit, thinketh concerning God and divine things as they themselves do wrongly think."

[90] Georgirenes, *Description*, preface. In 1676 Georgirenes fled to England where he established himself and became an important figure in the Greek community. On his life and works see Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, 1894, pp. 409–411, where Georgirenes' work is reprinted: *An account of his building of the Grecian Church in So-hoe fields and the disposal thereof by the Master of the Parish of St Martins in the Fields* from the British Library ms 816.m.9 (118).

[91] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 10.

[92] Fleuriau, *Missions* (Paris, 1695), p. 3.

[93] George Wheler, *A Journey into Greece by George Wheler Esq. In the company of Dr Spon of Lyons* (London, 1682), pp. 245–56; 259–60.

golden age.[94] It was widely believed that the glory of the Greek church was now spent but despite this, the association with the church in the East still carried with it nuances of the earliest times and a deep connection to the apostolic past.[95]

Allatios' writings reveal his involvement in the concerns of his age. The context of Allatios' greatest work, the *De consensione*, was the Catholic-Protestant polemic which raged throughout the seventeenth century. The Protestants had appropriated Orthodox polemic for their own needs and Allatios' friend Nihusius requested some material with which to counter the charges.[96] Both churches looked to the East to support their cause. Allatios responded with a composition that argued for the common outlook of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. In this he differed in his approach from other parties in the Catholic church who aimed to convert the Orthodox, or even to suppress the Greek rite altogether.[97] He and the others in the ecumenical group, the *Accademia Basiliana*, stressed the common origins and historical development of the two oldest churches. To combat their opponents, Allatios and his fellow ecumenists produced many books on the subject.[98] They argued that there were differences between the two, but these were of custom and did not relate to fundamental points in doctrine; for Allatios a true Orthodox was also a Catholic.

This sympathetic approach to Orthodoxy affected Allatios' treatment of popular beliefs. At the same time as amusing and informing his readers, he had to avoid giving ammunition to those who believed that Orthodoxy had declined into superstition. This was a difficult task given the Catholic church's suspicion of popular religion. From the 1570s onwards, the emphasis of the Inquisition had

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[94] Neveu, 'érudition', 197.

[95] Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 9–13; Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 3 notes that since these times the eastern church had changed and its early glory was now lost. The mantle had been passed to France and therefore it was only right that the French returned the glory of Christianity to its homeland. Although the contemporary eastern church had declined, its past glory continued to play a strong role in Fleuriau's thought.

[96] Bertoldus Nihusius was a friend of Allatios and edited many of Allatios' works including the *De opin.* and the *De consens.*

[97] See above p. 63 for Allatios' debate with Orazio Giustiniani and Urban VIII on these matters.

[98] Aside from Allatios' output, works were produced by Petrus Arcudius, (*De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis* (Paris, 1626)) and Jean Morin (*Commentarius de sacris ecclesiae ordinationibus, secundum antiquos et recentiores, Latinos, Graecos, Syros, et Babylonios* (Paris, 1655)) among others.

moved from crimes of diabolism to a prosecution of superstition.[99] Even though the diabolic element had been de-emphasised, the church was suspicious and felt threatened by practices deviating from those it prescribed. A separation was made between the religious practices of the church and the superstitions of the laity, which, in the eyes of the church, lay outside the bounds of Christianity. The religious orders, and particularly the Jesuits, were interested in reforming the practices of the laity, or 'Christianising', as they described it, understanding the local carnivals and festivals as relics of paganism.[100] Often missionaries to Ottoman lands reported that the Greek religion was full of pagan practices, and the sources frequently speak of the superstitious nature of the Greeks. As in Italy they attempted to eradicate or replace such beliefs with more pious practices.

In contrast to this picture, Allatios' presentation of popular beliefs is strikingly sympathetic. His ecumenism meant that he approached his subject with a positive view of Orthodoxy and he directed and shaped his presentation of the material to make it acceptable to a Catholic audience. Allatios found it essential to mitigate the discussion of 'superstitions' with examples of more acceptable practices. He was always careful to distinguish between the 'foolish' magical practices and those 'more pious' acts, which usually corresponded to the Catholic sacramentals. The fact that he mentions practices which pass ecclesiastical scrutiny is significant. At a time when Catholic authorities were hostile to the Greek rite it was vital to accentuate the acceptable practices, even in a work aiming to demystify popular superstitions.

Nevertheless, the impact of the Catholic reforms and the struggle between the Protestant and Catholic churches can be seen in the *De opinationibus*. Allatios concentrated on the areas of interaction between ecclesiastical and popular religion and considered popular beliefs surrounding church rituals and the most important festivals in the church calendar. This focus arises partly from the Tridentine emphasis on the sacraments. The Protestant rejection of the majority of the sacraments had led to an increasing emphasis on their place within Catholicism.

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[99] Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 139.

[100] Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: a New View of the Counter Reformation* (London, 1977), pp. 166; 177; Gentilcore, *Bishop*, pp. 70; 216.

Allatios was not the only one who approached popular beliefs in the context of inter-church relations. The papacy at this time was very sensitive to popular beliefs and tales which had been drawn into the debate between the churches and became part of the rhetoric of polemic. The legend of Pope Joan, in which a woman dressed as a man rose to the papal throne, was a matter of concern, and the consensus of the Orthodox and Protestants on this issue worried the seventeenth-century papacy. The Jesuit missionary, Father Richard, related how the Greeks and the Protestants laughed together about this and threw scorn at the papacy.[101] Concerned about such reports, Pope Urban VIII asked Allatios to investigate the origins of the tale.[102] He did so and showed it to have no historical foundation. Popular practices were also drawn into the debate in order to characterise and criticise the various churches. Covel writes about the Orthodox, "thus the Greeks notwithstanding all that Allatius and most Latins and others scornfully say to the contrary, most zealously maintain their belief of their Vourcolocus".[103] Despite Allatios' attempts to make people believe the opposite, Covel seems to suggest, the Orthodox remained sunk in superstition. Covel also implies that Allatios played down elements within popular Orthodoxy in order to make it more compatible with Catholicism. This accusation was made again from a Catholic perspective by Father Richard Simon:

> It is to be feared that it may be objected to Allatius, that he hath softned (sic) a great many things in the Opinions of the Greeks, through a Design of Reconciliation and to curry Favour with Pope Urban VIII.[104]

Simon was probably referring to Allatios' better known work, the *De consensione*, but the *De opinationibus*, published three years earlier, shares its ecumenical concerns. Popular beliefs could not be ignored by the ecumenist.

While the *De consensione* stresses the similarities between Orthodox and Catholic doctrine, the *De opinationibus* draws comparisons between Orthodox and Catholic popular beliefs and practices. Both Orthodox

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[101] Richard, *Relation*, p. 151. See also Covel, *Church*, 1722, p. xi: "We and the Greeks have the current story of Pope Joan, and the Latins have one of a She Patriarch at Constantinople."

[102] *De Joanna papissa fabula commentatio* (Cologne, 1645).

[103] Covel, *Church*, p. xli.

[104] Simon, *Critical History*, p. 9.

and Catholics, for example, considered the water used to wash an altar to be powerful and a tonic for invalids.[105] Again, both Orthodox and Catholics shared beliefs in the incorruptible nature of the sacraments.[106] These beliefs are both of the 'more pious' variety, but Allatios also saw similarities between less acceptable Greek and western beliefs.[107] If the Orthodox laity was superstitious, it was no more blameworthy than its Latin counterpart. However, on certain occasions Allatios argued that these Orthodox popular beliefs contained elements which could be used to draw Catholics and Orthodox closer together. Some popular beliefs were more compatible with the dogma of the Catholic church than with official Orthodoxy. The discussion of undissolved bodies in *De Purgatorio* revives the subject, and again reveals the interplay between 'popular' Orthodox and doctrinal Catholic beliefs in the work of Allatios.[108]

Demons and Nature: Medicine and Neoplatonic Philosophy

If the influence of Allatios' antiquarian studies is boldly stated in his introduction, the effect of his medical training is more subtle. Nevertheless if the text is considered carefully, it reveals Allatios' involvement in yet another live issue of the seventeenth century: the relationship between the spiritual and natural worlds. This issue involved the medical profession as well as natural philosophers and had many different manifestations. It played a role in the tension between the scholastic view of the world and the discoveries of the 'New Philosophers'; it came up in the discussion over the extent to which God was actively involved in the running of the world and it was central to the distinction between the miraculous and the natural. The debate over the relationship between spirit and matter continued throughout the scientific revolution. Scholars have identified a slow movement away from the Renaissance analogical interpretation of nature during the early modern period. This philosophy looked through nature rather than at it and regarded the world as

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[105] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124.

[106] Ibid., XXIV, pp. 171–73.

[107] Ibid., II, p. 115; III, p. 116; IX, p. 138 compares the *gello* to the western witch.

[108] *De utriusque ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua in dogmate de Purgatorio consensione* (Rome, 1655), pp. 38–41.

a book written to communicate God's purpose to mankind. In the seventeenth century this approach was rejected by the New Philosophy, represented by the likes of the mechanistic theory of René Descartes and the inductive reasoning of Francis Bacon, which limited the activity of God in the world. The chemist Robert Boyle also argued that matter had to be "divested of spiritual and other inherent power in order to be seen in a proper light."[109] Nevertheless, the question of the relationship between God and nature remained open and in the seventeenth century, the approaches of the Renaissance and the New Philosophy, of Aristotle and Plato, and of religion and natural magic were blended together in different proportions.

At first sight this looks like a strange context in which to set Allatios' text on the 'beliefs of the Greeks today' but in his choice of subject matter, Allatios claims to have been guided by the interests of his addressee, the eminent doctor Paolo Zacchias (1584–1659).[110] Zacchias, a contemporary of Allatios, was famous for his medical writings, both in his own times and today. He has been hailed as the father of public health, forensic medicine, and clinical psychopathology and his contribution to ideas of medical malpractice and mental deficiency has also been recognised.[111] His most important work was the massive *Quaestiones medicolegales*, first published in part in 1623, which deals with everything from the treatment of wounds to mental illness. Again, it may seem curious that the topic of Greek popular religion would have interested Zacchias, but in the seventeenth century the remit of the doctor encroached upon the theological sphere. With their knowledge of natural cause and effect, doctors were considered best qualified to judge whether an illness had a natural cause which they could treat, or a supernatural one which required the attention of the church. This can be seen, for

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[109] John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 76.

[110] Zacchias also appears in Allatios, *Apes urbanae*, pp. 302–306. Apart from this, the only other reference I have found to him in Allatios' work comes in a letter of 1645 to Nihusius. Allatios closes with "Our Zacchias sends his greetings to you." See Allatios, *De consens.*, col. 1659.

[111] Zdzislaw Traunfellner, 'Paolo Zacchia — Vater der Gerichtlichen Medizin, 400 Jahre nach seiner Geburt', *Zeitschrift für Rechtsmedizin* 94:2 (1985), 159–63; H.-J. Wagner, 'Zur historischen Entwicklung des Begriffs "Ärtzlicher Kunstfehler"', *Zeitschrift für Rechtsmedizin* 86:4 (1981), 303–306; Paul F. Cranefield and Walter Federn, 'Paulus Zacchias on Mental Deficiency and on Deafness', *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 46:1 (1970), 3–21.

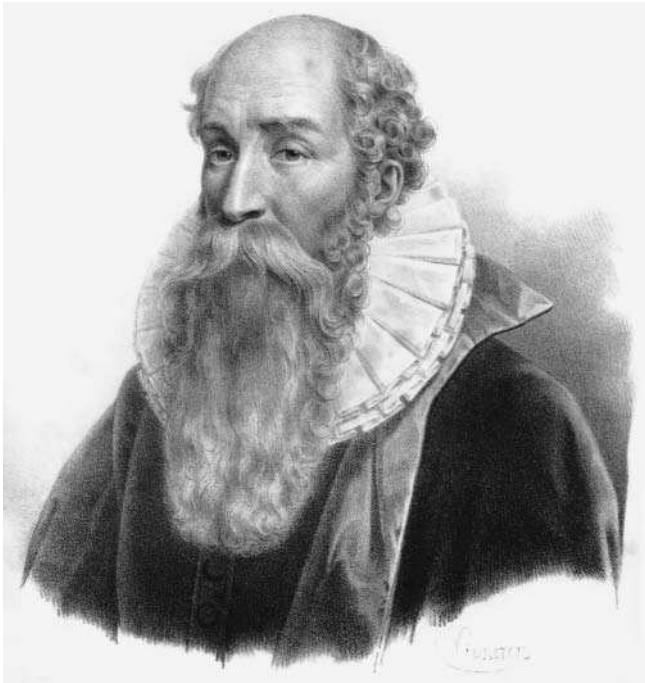

Fig. 2. Paolo Zacchias (1584–1659)

example, in Zacchias' discussion of impotence where he lists the signs and possible causes at length.[112] He would not admit the possibility of witchcraft unless all the usual symptoms of the illness were absent. Doctors were also requested to investigate whether certain phenomena were truly miraculous or subject to normal physical laws, an extremely important function at a time when the church applied increasingly strict criteria in its assessment of miracles. Following the Reformation and the Protestant denunciation of miracles as Catholic magic, the papacy was under pressure to examine any reported miracles thoroughly. For Zacchias, a miracle was only a true miracle if it could not be explained through natural causes. The laws of nature bound even demons to a certain extent. They could not preserve a body except through art and prevention of natural processes. God, however, did not have to act to prevent natural processes, such as

[112] Paulus Zacchias, *Quaestiones medicolegales* (Lyons, 1674), lib. iii. tit. 1. q. v, pp. 229 ff.

decay, by drying out a body, but managed to preserve the body entire with flesh intact.[113] Similarly, true prophecy was not open to demons. They only seemed to tell the future, and their predictions were based on extrapolation from the present situation or their knowledge of the past.[114] Zacchias considers various cases of miracles, such as bodies that failed to decompose after death, prophecy, and levitation, which was much in vogue as a sign of sanctity in the Tridentine church.[115]

There is a tension in Zacchias' work surrounding the position of demonic action: were demons subject to or outside natural causes? In some cases, as discussed above, they were bound by natural laws. In others, such as impotence, they could only be admitted as a cause when the natural explanation failed. With the advance of medicine it was becoming increasingly difficult to find a place for demons in disease causation but the large number of authorities who ascribed a role to them meant that they could not be ignored. In his discussions Zacchias considers witches and poisoners, but he writes, "I, who have no faith at other times in these things, do not dare simply to deny spells".[116] He could not dismiss them altogether, but it was his sceptical approach that dominated his work. It is on this that Allatios focuses when he notes that Zacchias has "considered, treated, and made fun of all these things, or at least the more important".[117]

Allatios, like Zacchias, tries to explain phenomena as the result of natural causes. He is scornful of those who believe that anyone born during Christmas week is possessed by the devil, understanding strange behaviour as the result of mental illness, rather than diabolic possession:

> Tripotamata is a place on the island of Chios, wooded and inaccessible, and never visited by any man, but always infested with ghostly spectres, where it is rumoured that these *kallikantzaroi* congregate, and linger and display their craftsmanship. Therefore [the inhabitants of Chios] dismiss apparently absurd, insane and delirious as men of a similar sort.[118]

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[113] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iv. tit. i. q. x, p. 320.
[114] Ibid., lib. iv. tit. i. q. v, p. 293.
[115] Ibid., lib. iv. tit. i. q. vi, pp. 295–96. The piety of both Theresa of Ávila and Philip Neri was supposed to have been revealed through their levitation.
[116] Ibid., lib. ii. tit. ii. q. xiii, p. 189.
[117] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 115.
[118] Ibid., XI, p. 141; see also ch. X, p. 140.

Given this attempt to demystify and condemn certain beliefs, it is curious that Allatios attacks the explanation of the *gello* or 'witch', as he calls this creature, provided by the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos. In chapter IX he writes "Michael Psellos attributes similar diseases of children to natural causes, which we see in our research to arise from witches."[119] Allatios, who would normally advocate such a stance, in this case appears to criticise it. Indeed, in the next chapter he does not reject Psellos' natural explanation for the *babutzikarios*, regarding it as 'to be praised', rather than as 'failing to satisfy', as his exposition on witchcraft does.[120]

This would seem to suggest that the case of witchcraft is a special one but it does not necessarily imply that Allatios believed in witches. Other indications in the text point to a dismissal of this belief. Earlier he laughs at the fear people have of little old women, who they believe to be witches, and the methods people use to ward them off.[121] This implies that he considered witchcraft neither threatening nor efficacious. It would also be peculiar, having mentioned Zacchias' scepticism of witchcraft, then to criticise Psellos for failing to believe. It is Allatios' relationship with Zacchias and his text which can explain the dismissal of Psellos' explanation. The section on witchcraft is the one part of *De opinationibus* in which Allatios refers directly to the contents of Zacchias' book. Allatios writes that he had intended to write of "*striges* and poisoners and on the futile beliefs of men on this subject" but had been hindered by past and present authors, including Zacchias, who had displayed their expertise on this matter.[122] Zacchias, as we have noted, had an extremely sceptical outlook: he preferred an explanation in terms of natural causes. However, he also explained why beliefs in witchcraft had arisen. Beliefs in the *lamia* and other such creatures were the result of strong poisons which 'drag men from their minds' and caused them to see such things.[123] Thus he explained both why people claim to see

[119] Ibid., IX, p. 138.
[120] The *babutzikarios*, like the *vrykolakas* or the *gello*, was a demon. Different sources associate it with different characteristics, a common occurrence with popular demons. For some it was a frightening goblin, for others it brought on the symptoms of indigestion. See Allatios, *De opin.* X, p. 140; IX–X, pp. 139–40.
[121] Ibid., VII, p. 136.
[122] Ibid., I, p. 115.
[123] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. ii, tit. i, q. xvii, p. 150.

witches and why certain individuals behave in witch-like ways. Psellos' analysis of witchcraft, where he states that children were wasting away because of a particular disease, explains only the death of the child. He has failed to resolve the problem of why certain individuals were marked out as witches, and how people could see things which did not exist. Allatios therefore finds Zacchias' treatment of witchcraft more satisfactory than that of Psellos.

In contrast, Allatios accepts Psellos' discussion of the *babutzikarios*. Unlike his discussion of the *gello*, this explanation does take account of the important social factor of why people experience events in terms of demonic activity. He describes how the 'superstition' arose from a pagan belief and was later associated with the devil. He also provides an explanation of why someone might see the *babutzikarios*. It was an apparition which:

> arose from the common infection of body and mind, for his [the sick man's] mind was troubled by an inherited disease. At that time he could not see very well . . . what [in fact] his eyes perceived internally, seemed to him [to come] from the outside.[124]

The *babutzikarios* was a product of a hallucination. Psellos adds that this creature is often seen at Christmas and Epiphany, on account of the necessary festivities, when people visit each other at night. The combination of revelry and darkness encourages the imagination. Thus Psellos' account of the *babutzikarios* is more in line with the kind of explanations favoured by Zacchias. Moreover, as Zacchias does not discuss the *babutzikarios*, Psellos has a clear field. Allatios does not have to condemn him in order to show his addressee in a favourable light.

Therefore in the *De opinationibus* Allatios engages with Zacchias in a debate about the role of demons in the causes of disease and their actions in the natural world. We should bear in mind, however, that neither Zacchias' nor Allatios' assumptions about what constitutes 'natural' is equivalent to our own. In Zacchias' analysis of the miraculous we have seen how demons are thought to act within nature. They are spiritual beings but their activities are confined by the rules of the natural world. Allatios' understanding of the natural world also incorporated spiritual action. Regarding reports of demons which

[124] Allatios, *De opin.* X, p. 140; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 163.

roamed the streets and fields he argued "I do not doubt that sometimes these things also know some natural causes, for many are undone by a visual impact or by a ghost which they say they have seen, or contract some disease of the body."[125] For Allatios the fact that people see demons can be due to an injury caused by an encounter with a ghost. Allatios and Zacchias make a distinction between natural and supernatural causes but their categories do not correspond with ours.

Along with the debates over the causation of illness, Allatios' work touches on investigations into the natural world in another way. In its emphasis on the importance of experience the *De opinationibus* advertises that it belongs to the genre known as 'Books of Secrets', which is linked to subjects as seemingly diverse as the New Philosophy and magic. These considered the mysteries of nature, that is, the hidden or occult connections between natural objects which could only be discovered by careful investigation. 'Secrets of Nature' largely rested upon a Neoplatonic outlook that mapped out the world in terms of chains of correspondences which emanated down from the stars and connected and infused with spirit all things animate and inanimate. The spirits inherent in objects determined the properties that governed the secret or occult relationships between earthly materials, and their properties were indicated by a mark or 'signature' that naturally occurred on the object.[126] Through careful observation humankind could discover these correspondences, which acted on each other by virtue of 'unseen powers.'

The extent to which Allatios shared in the Neoplatonic perspective receives more detailed treatment in chapter 10 below but such a perspective might seem to distance him from ideas of the 'scientific revolution' and the philosophy of Descartes. However, any investigation into secrets of nature necessitated an empirical approach and careful observation of the world and the appeal of this method went beyond the adherents of Neoplatonism.[127] Most famously Bacon underlined the importance of the empirical method:

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[125] Allatios, *De opin.*, XX, p. 162.

[126] William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, 1994), p. 214.

[127] John Henry, 'Magic and Science in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' in R.C. Olby (ed.), *Companion to the History of Modern Science* (London, 1990), pp. 588–90.

> man being the servant and interpreter of Nature can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of Nature: beyond this he neither knows anything nor can do anything.[128]

Others investigating the natural world adopted the Neoplatonic explanation of phenomena in terms of 'unseen powers'. Boyle, who was determined to divest nature of its spiritual powers, allowed for the action of unseen powers provided that the effects could be revealed through experiments.[129] Some Aristotelians even followed such an approach, without adopting wholesale the underpinning Neoplatonism, because it provided a more satisfactory description of the action of invisible forces than their own philosophy that depended on perception of forces through the senses.[130] The Neoplatonic perspective as well as the new philosophy played a role in the developments of the seventeenth century.

Although aspects of the Neoplatonic approach were adopted by men of science to meet their aetiological needs, Neoplatonism was viewed with great suspicion by the church. Allatios risked the wrath of the church because of his Neoplatonic interests. Platonists, such as Francesco Patrizi (1529–1579) who had held the chair of Platonic philosophy at the University of Sapienza in Rome, were also denounced and Patrizi's works were banned posthumously.[131] It is a measure of the church's concern that on the advice of the papal theologian, Cardinal Bellarmine, the chair was not filled after Patrizi's death.[132] The philosophy was attacked partly because it was closely connected to astrology. The Neoplatonic chains of correspondences originated with the stars and the natural magician John Baptista Della Porta (1535–1615) argued all interactions between objects on earth looked "to the stars as their causes; whereas if a man be ignorant thereof, he loseth the greatest part of the knowledge of secret operations and works of nature."[133] In 1586 Sixtus V (1585–1590) issued a bull

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[128] Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* ed. R.L. Ellis, J. Spedding et al., *The Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 4 (London, 1892), p. 47, Aphorisms I and IV; quoted in Henry, 'Magic', p. 589.

[129] Henry, 'Magic', p. 591.

[130] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 224–27.

[131] William R. Shea, 'Galileo and the Church' in David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (eds.), *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (London, 1986), pp. 117; 127.

[132] Ibid., p. 115.

[133] Clark, *Demons*, p. 218.

banning astrology and divination and in 1631 Urban VIII restated Sixtus' bull after the abbot Orazio Morandi predicted the death of the pope through astrological means.[134] Urban's action only underlines the extent to which astrology was still seen as an efficacious science.

But the church was also suspicious of Neoplatonism on account of its connection with magic. Both natural and demonic magicians worked within a Neoplatonic framework and claimed to be able to manipulate secret properties in order to create wonders. In demonic magic, the magus attempted to gain control over the more powerful spirits higher up the chain of correspondences and then used the knowledge he obtained to manipulate the natural world and create marvels and wonders.[135] In natural magic the magus did not resort to demonology but manipulated nature through the correspondences he had ascertained through careful observation of nature. The proponents of natural magic tried to distinguish themselves from demonic magicians, and some even eschewed contact with demons altogether.[136] However, the distinction between the two types of magic was always unclear and during the sixteenth century the church tried to suppress both kinds.[137] It was difficult to distinguish the impersonal spirits, which played a central role in Neoplatonic natural magic, from the personal spirits of demonic magic. Della Porta was interrogated by the Inquisition in 1574 and again in 1580 because he had written about the secrets of nature.[138] Moreover, the attempt of the magus in demonic magic to cut through the careful process of observation by gaining control over the demons higher up the chain of correspondences threatened the monopoly of the Christian faith in dealings with the supernatural and also threatened to descend into idolatry. However, even marvels produced through natural magic were threatening. If marvels could be produced naturally, a miracle would no longer be extraordinary or 'extra-natural'.[139]

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[134] Shea, 'Galileo', p. 129.
[135] Clark, *Demons*, p. 217.
[136] Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 205.
[137] Ibid., p. 196.
[138] Ibid., p. 202.
[139] William B. Ashworth Jr, 'Catholicism and Early Modern Science' in Lindberg *God and Nature*, p. 138.

What has this discussion of natural magic to do with Allatios? Many of the sixteenth-century authors writing on popular beliefs were themselves natural magicians. In the sixteenth century Della Porta argued that the beliefs and practices of the 'common people' contained many important truths, and that they knew things unknown to the wisest of men. The peasantry had preserved knowledge of secret correspondences and these could be recovered if the people were studied. However, the decision of the church to reform popular practices had implications for research into this subject. The church identified the spirits and demons of popular religion with witchcraft and the devil and therefore learned authors attempted to distance themselves from the viewpoints they described in their texts.[140] While the work of Della Porta demonstrates an abiding interest in the material that popular culture could provide, it also reveals the distance between the natural magician and the popular source. In his unpublished work, the *Criptologia*, he discussed how natural magic could purify popular superstitions, 'giving them rational, scientific foundations.'[141] This negative attitude often meant that interpretations of popular religion relied on classical or early church sources, rather than observation of and research into popular practices.[142] A few authors, however, had a more open-minded attitude. Like Della Porta, Paracelsus, the sixteenth-century doctor and chemist, was certain of the importance of popular beliefs and practices but he had studied them at first hand and took a more sympathetic approach.[143] On the whole, those who discussed popular beliefs had a very limited experience of them. The climate hardened against popular practices further in the seventeenth century when works discussed the superstitious nature of popular culture and the ignorance of the 'common people'. In 1646 Thomas Browne lambasted 'vulgar and common' errors in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* and the earlier *De gli erori Popolari d'Italia* (1603) of Scipione Mercurio did the same for Italian popular practices.[144] These contemporary approaches to popular beliefs

[140] Charles Webster, 'Paracelsus and Demons: Science as a Synthesis of Popular Belief' in Paolo Zambelli (ed.), *Scienze credenze occulte livelli di cultura* (Florence, 1982), p. 11.
[141] Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 204.
[142] Webster, 'Demons', 11; 18.
[143] Ibid., 12–13.
[144] Burke, *Popular Culture*, p. 273.

must be borne in mind when considering Allatios' account in the *De opinationibus*.

Written in 1645, Allatios' letter was composed at a time when attitudes to popular religion were becoming less sympathetic and the papacy disapproved of Neoplatonism. It is strange that Allatios, working at the heart of the Vatican, embarked on a project that the Holy See would have regarded with suspicion, if not hostility. Although the *De opinationibus* is not a serious, intellectual work, it would hardly have been a welcome publication in the Rome of Urban VIII. It reveals Allatios' familiarity with the Neoplatonic outlook and hints at his astrological knowledge. In this context it is interesting that the *De opinationibus* was printed in Amsterdam, not in Cologne as the title page states, two years after Urban's death. Many works that did not have the full support of the church were printed outside its principal areas of influence. This was often deliberately disguised by inserting an alternative place of publication on the title page. The other two works printed in the collection, the *De templis Graecorum recentioribus*, a pair of letters written to Jean Morin, and the *De narthece ecclesiae veteris* to Gaspares de Simeonibus seem to supply no cause for ecclesiastical concern.[145] It is only the *De opinationibus* which would have necessitated publication outwith papal lands.

Although not one of his major works, the *De opinationibus* of Allatios synthesises the main themes of his other writings and deserves close attention for it contains important strands of the intellectual debate of the seventeenth century. Allatios' letter forms part of the discourse surrounding popular beliefs and practices in the early modern period, drawing in current themes from the fields of antiquarianism, ecclesiastical studies and natural philosophy. However, it is not clear exactly where the *De opinationibus* stands with respect to other works on popular religion of the time. Allatios' approach to his subject matter is a complex one. What is his attitude to popular religion? Does he follow the trend of the late sixteenth or of the early seventeenth century in his analysis? To what extent is he sympathetic to the beliefs he describes? How much knowledge does he have on the subject? In order to discover his place within these traditions and to evaluate his knowledge and interpretation of the beliefs we will now turn to investigate the content of the text in detail.

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[145] For the letters to Jean Morin see Leo Allatios, *The Newer Temples of the Greeks*, ed. and trans. Anthony Cutler (London, 1969).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *GELLO* AND POPULAR RELIGION

Psellos wrote in the eleventh century "the *gillo* truly is an ancient and oft repeated name."[1] Accounts of this creature, often called a 'child-stealing demon', are found in a wide variety of texts spanning an extensive time period. Allatios discovered references to her in exorcisms, a church history, a *Life* of a patriarch, proverbs, the dictionary *Suidas*, and, even further back, in the verse of the archaic poet Sappho.[2] The profusion of amulets, which have been identified as apotropaic devices directed against the *gello*, indicates that this creature was feared in earlier periods still.[3] The belief also extends beyond Allatios' time and even appears in twentieth-century exorcism texts and folklore collections.[4] The topic presents an ideal opportunity for Allatios to demonstrate his premise: the continuity of customs and morals in each period.[5] Before Allatios, authors had tried to discover the origins of the *gello* in texts drawn from various ancient traditions. When Psellos could not find her in Greek texts, he turned to Hebrew works, suggesting that the *gello* could be identified with the demon Lilith.[6] Psellos' approach has been followed, often

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[1] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

[2] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; Sappho, *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta*, ed. Edgar Lobel and Denys Page (Oxford, 1955) no. 178 p. 101.

[3] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 84–85 n. 2. Greenfield notes that similarities exist between more recent images of the demon being speared by a mounted rider and those which appear on an amulet from the seventh or eighth century BC: John Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings: Early Bronze Age to Late Classical* (London, 1970), p. 125, pls. 210; 112; 134; John Boardman, *Island Gems. A Study of Greek Seals in the Geometric and Early Archaic Periods* (London, 1963), p. 130, G14. For other such seals see F.H. Stubbings, 'Ivories' in T.J. Dunbabin (ed.), *Perachora: the Sanctuaries of Hera Akraia, and Limenia; Excavations of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1930–1933*, vol. 2, *Pottery, Ivories, Scarabs and Other Objects* (Oxford, 1962), p. 412.

[4] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 92, 103; Demetrios B. Oikonomides, ''Η γελλὼ εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ Ρουμανικὴν λαογραφίαν', *Λαογραφία* 30 (1975), 246–78; Demetrios B. Oikonomides, 'Yello dans les traditions des peuples helléniques et roumains', *Λαογραφία* 22 (1965), 328–34; Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 100–101; 174; Stylianos Vios, 'Χιακαὶ παραδόσεις', *Λαογραφία* 8 (1921–1925), 430–31.

[5] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 114.

[6] Ibid. III, p. 118. Irène Sorlin, 'Striges et Géloudes. Histoire d'une croyance et

very fruitfully, by historians and folklorists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have traced the links between the *gello* and analogous creatures from other cultures.[7] The aim in this chapter is not to follow the method of Psellos and Allatios, but to examine popular conceptions about the nature of the *gello* in the Byzantine and early modern periods. In chapters 5 and 6 the *gello* will then be placed within the theological and social context of the seventeenth century and her relevance to everyday life will be examined.

The *gello* was an extremely unpleasant creature. Her defining characteristics were her violent behaviour towards women in childbirth and, above all, her voracious appetite for the blood of new-born children. The fragment from Sappho states enigmatically 'Γελλοῦς παιδοφιλωτέρα': "those who are madly in love with children", which is glossed by *Suidas*: "they supposed that her ghost penetrates children and those dying young."[8] This is clarified by a proverb from Lesbos, "her ghost strikes at children, and they attribute the early deaths of other people to her."[9] Ignatios the Deacon also comments on the *gello* in his *Life* of the iconophile Patriarch Tarasios (784–806), asserting that some believe the *gello* "to attack and kill newly-born infants."[10] Psellos is more emotive: *gelloudes* "suck blood and devour all the vital fluids which are in the little infant."[11] In the fourteenth century, the writer and cleric Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos describes how they "bring the infant from the bedroom, as if about to devour him."[12] Finally, Allatios testifies to the currency of belief in his own time, recording that a variety of similar names were used for the creature: *gelu*, *gello* or *gillo*.

The exorcism of the *gello* shows the determination of the creature to pursue her vampire-like desires. Although a plethora of different

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d'une tradition', *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 416, believes that this was because Psellos wanted to claim a popular rather than classical origin for this text.

[7] See for example, A.A. Barb, 'Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil's Grandmother', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 1–23.

[8] *Suidas*, vol. 1, p. 512, no. 112.

[9] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 116; Ernst Ludwig von Leutsch and Friedrich Wilhelm Schneidewin (eds.), *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* (Göttingen, 1839–51; reprint, Hildesheim, 1958), vol. 1: 'Zenobius: Centuria', p. 58.

[10] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117; Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (Aldershot, 1998), p. 172; see Efthymiadis' notes on this passage, pp. 210–11.

[11] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

[12] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117; Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Ecclesiasticae Historiae*, *PG* 147, cols. 345–48.

versions exists and details of the exorcism rite vary in the different texts, the sense remains the same.[13] The *gello* was an evil demon who attacked children but was ultimately defeated through the power of God and his saints. The tale runs as follows:

> Under the consulate of King Laurentios, there was a woman in the region of Austidis, or Arabia, by the name of Melitene, who gave birth to seven children, whom the accursed creature called *gelu* snatched from her. And again Melitene conceived and, with birth very near, she built a tower which she fortified inside and out and placed twenty-five years' supplies in the tower.[14] Then Melitene entered the tower with two girls.
>
> Furthermore, the saints of God, Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, brothers of Melitene, were soldiering in Numeria, or rather Arabia. Therefore, at some point it so happened that when the army was discharged to winter quarters, they came to the tower to visit their own sister. When they arrived at the gates, straining their voices, they shouted to be let in. Melitene did not want to open the gates at all, saying, "I cannot open them for you, for a son was born to me and I am full of fear. Therefore I shall not open <the gates>." They strained their voices, saying, "Open to us, for we are the messengers of God, and we bring the mysteries of God." She opened <the gates> and the saints of God entered. At the same time an unclean spirit came up from the ground and entered the throat of one of the horses of the saints. In the middle of the night it killed the child.
>
> Wailing bitterly, Melitene said in an anguished voice, "O Sisinnios, and you Sisynodoros, what have you done to me? For that reason I would not have opened the door to you."[15]

Melitene had already lost many children to the *gello* and went to great lengths to protect herself and her new-born baby. This was to no avail as the creature entered her sanctuary at the same time as her brothers. Their intervention, however, was vital. The saints' insistence that she opened the door led to the death of her child but this also provided them with the opportunity to defeat the *gello*. The saints pursued her, seized her, and through the power of God forced her to return the infant. In doing so they also compelled the *gello* to reveal how parents could in future protect themselves from her depredations. What begins as an individual tragedy with the

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[13] On the variations see the extensive survey of *gello* texts provided by Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 83–141.

[14] Allatios' Latin translation from the Greek is faulty here, and so I have followed the Greek text.

[15] The description below is taken from the second *gello* exorcism provided by Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 135.

abduction of Melitene's baby, is transformed into a victory for all parents.

The Nature of the Gello

All the texts cited by Allatios agree on the kind of behaviour exhibited by the *gello* but they are not so consistent when it comes to the question of her nature. In the exorcism text quoted above, the *gello* appears in the form of a demon. This is apparent from her nature which exhibits demonic characteristics: she is incorporeal, or at least her substance is more malleable than that of humans, giving her the ability to fly through the air and change shape at will. She is also described as an 'unclean spirit' or '*akátharton pnevma*', one of the commonest terms used for an evil spirit.[16]

In other texts, however, it is clearly a human being who performed the dreadful deeds of the *gello*. Allatios states that the wicked acts of the *gelloudes* were attributed to poor and miserable old crones but people did not only stigmatise others in this way, they also accused themselves. The *Nomokanon* of Cotelerius provides penances for women who became *gelloudes*, once again suggesting that the *gello* was viewed as human, rather than a demon.[17] It must be noted here that the sin of being a *gello* was differentiated from that of infanticide and received separate penances. Thus not all women who killed their children were considered, or considered themselves, to be *gelloudes*. A passage from the *Life of Tarasios* by Ignatios the Deacon, of which Allatios excerpts part, also displays a tendency to view the *gello* as in some sense a human being. Ignatios lays out the facts of a court case judged by Tarasios' father in which two women were brought before him charged with being *gelloudes*. Their accusers clearly believed that they had indulged in the same kind of behaviour as the demonic *gello*. Ignatios comments that:

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[16] Ibid. Latin translation: '*spiritus immundus*'. For *akátharton pnevma* see A. Delatte, and Ch. Josserand, 'Contribution à l'étude de la démonologie byzantine', Mélanges Bidez; *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales* 2 (1934), 208. Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 27 notes that this expression was used in the New Testament to refer to demons who possessed people. The name of the demons arose from their uncleanliness that resulted from their fall from the angelic state.

[17] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 115; J.B. Cotelerius, *Ὁ νομοκάνων τοῦ Cotelerius*, ed. Georgios Poulis (Thessaloniki, 1992), p. 149, canon cccclxxxix.

> those deceived and beguiled by the spirit of this tale, relate this story as if true <and> try to transfer this accursed deed to weak women, attributing to them the reason why those <children> die before time, by virtue of their conversion into a spirit.[18]

He believes that the deeds in the story have been attributed to a particular sector of society, that is, to certain 'weak women'. Moreover, people were so convinced that the two women were to blame for the deaths of the children that it led to a court case. In the eleventh century, Psellos testifies to the currency of the belief amongst the 'common people'. He records that this

> fancy which occupies the souls of almost all, confers the same power on elderly women. Therefore it adds wings to those tired by age and will secretly convey them to the children.[19]

It was popularly believed that individuals did not carry out these acts in their human form, but "by virtue of their conversion into a spirit" which enabled them to fly and pass through material objects that impeded their approach to the children. At the same time they remained real humans with a corporeal nature.

Psellos himself rejects these ideas. He cannot accept the transference of the deed to humans and the consequent assumption of a spiritual nature that this requires.[20] The majority of *nomokanones* also attack the belief and prescribe penances for those who believe in the *gello*: "those who say that *gelloudes* are women who suck the blood of children and kill them; this is a deception of the devil and in no way is it accepted."[21] The *gello* is nothing but an illusion of the devil, cast before those who are poor in faith in order to draw them into practices which anger God.

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[18] For the passage quoted by Allatios see *De opin.* III, p. 117. For the full text see Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

[19] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

[20] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

[21] Gennadios Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. 2 (Constantinople, 1933), p. 248. See also βιβλιοθήκη Βουλῆς ms. 83, f. 46v; Manuel Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων Μανουὴλ Νοταρίου τοῦ Μαλαξοῦ τοῦ ἐκ Ναυπλίου τῆς Πελοποννήσου', D. Ginis and N. Pantazopoulos (ed.), *"Νόμος", Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Σχολῆς Νομικῶν καὶ Οἰκονομικῶν Ἐπιστημῶν τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 1 (1982), canon 85, pp. 455–56.

The Gello *and the Church*

Different opinions therefore existed regarding the nature of the *gello* but these cannot be divided along the lines of lay/clergy or popular/elite. The *nomokanones* were written and administered by clerics or monks and the fact that some texts provide a penance for those who were *gelloudes* indicates that the author accepted the possibility of a human *gello*. Similarly, the exorcism of the *gello* required a priest to carry it out and so also implies the involvement of the church.[22] On the other hand, not all members of the laity subscribed to the belief. Psellos, who only became a monk late in life under duress, was extremely sceptical of the belief. However, of those who did accept the *gello*, a number came from the upper classes, and the belief even extended as far as the imperial court. Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos wrote of the empress:

> The mother herself truly said that at the time of birth a certain new and different odour of sweetness was brought forth from the land. <She said> that above all (and almost incredible to me) it is a characteristic of little old women (and she who is called *empusa* <whom> others may call *gilo*) that they bring the infant from the bedroom, as if about to devour him.[23]

It is therefore impossible to regard this belief as the property of a particular social category. It cuts across boundaries and is accepted or rejected by individuals within different social groupings.

Nevertheless, the majority of the *nomokanones* rejected the existence of the *gello*, suggesting that this was the accepted approach of normative Orthodoxy as opposed to that of individual clerics. Belief in the *gello* contravened one of the most important tenets of the church: the omnipotence of God. Orthodoxy held that there was only one supreme, omnipotent, omniscient creator, God, who effectively limited the power of the devil. The church opposed the various dualist sects that postulated the existence of two principal powers — a

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[22] See for example the instructions in Theocharis Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι": ἕνα ἄγνωστο χειρόγραφο ἐξορκισμῶν ἀπό τὸν βορειοελλαδικό χῶρο', *Β΄ Συμπόσιο Λαογραφίας τοῦ Βορειοελλαδικοῦ Χώρου, Ἤπειρος-Μακεδονία-Θράκη* [Transactions of the Second Conference of Folklore of Northern Greece] (Thessaloniki, 1976), p. 411.

[23] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117; Xanthopoulos, *Ecclesiasticae Historiae, PG* 147, cols 345–48.

creator of good and a creator of evil. The official position was that the devil could only act with God's consent and those he moved against were people God wished to punish. As a consequence of its anti-dualist stance, Orthodoxy also denied the existence of creatures which performed evil according to their own whims. The *gello*, who was popularly believed to act to fulfil her own needs and desires, could not be accepted into this framework.[24]

The church was concerned that attributing misfortune to the independent acts of demons and *gelloudes* could distract people from investigating the true cause of an event, preventing them from examining their consciences and seeking forgiveness for their sins. To a certain extent, a system that explained misfortune and evil in terms of punishment from God held sin to be the root cause of suffering. Parents whose children died soon after birth were expected to perform penance — one year if the infant had been baptised; three if unbaptised; two if the death occurred through negligence.[25] The latter two instructions indicate the particular sin of the parents: physical negligence, or more seriously, the neglect of the spiritual welfare of the infant. In the first case where the infant had been baptised, the parents had not failed in their duty, but penance still had to be performed. Even a death for which the parents had no responsibility disturbed their relationship with God. Attributing the death of the child to the *gello* who worked outside God's plan both involved the parents in a form of dualism and prevented them from atoning for their sins and restoring their bond with God.

The *gello* also contravened the inviolability of the human form. The texts presented by Allatios reveal a range of beliefs regarding her nature: human being, ghost, demon. In fact it is clear from the descriptions above that the *gello* partook of both human and spiritual natures simultaneously. Ignatios and Psellos state that people believed that when a human being became a *gello*, she took on demonic form. She could fly and pass though walls and locked doors.[26] But she also retained her human nature: she had a gender, when according to official church theology demons were sexless, she felt pain and required nourishment. The increased corporeality of spiritual

[24] See also chapter 9 below pp. 239–40 on the relationship between ecclesiastical and popular views of demons.
[25] Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, pp. 148–49, canons cccclxxxiv–cccclxxxvi.
[26] See also John of Damascus, *De strygibus, PG* 94, col. 1604.

beings is characteristic of the popular conception of demons but the official description differentiated them much more clearly from human beings.[27] The church wished to keep these two categories separate and mutually exclusive, believing the nature of human beings to be immutable. Although originally drawn from the text of a pagan philosopher, Psellos' work states this Orthodox position clearly:

> <all> emphatically deny the distortion of nature, and neither is a wild beast ever clothed as man nor <does> a man become a wild beast, nor assuredly a demon nor an angel.[28]

In spite of this opposition, the sources do not reveal a great concern on the part of the church over these beliefs. On the whole, popular beliefs, of which the *gello* was a part, were not threatening, or even of interest to the Byzantine church. There is no discussion of popular practices in the early *nomokanones* beyond the censure of the collection of herbs for magical purposes.[29] In later *nomokanones*, which become more detailed as the church's interest in confession and penance increased from the twelfth century onwards, there is a little more information.[30] Nevertheless, the *gello* is not discussed in the majority of *nomokanones* and, where it does appear, the treatment is cursory.[31]

The Gello *and Iconoclasm*

In certain political and religious contexts the *gello* and the issues surrounding her ambiguous human/demonic nature took on more importance and thus more detailed information was provided on her. She appears in an ecclesiastical source during the iconoclastic debate, the controversy over the use of icons in worship that occurred in the eastern church c. 725–842. From the reign of Constantine V (741–775),

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[27] Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp. 212; 214.

[28] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164; see also Proclus, *Commentaire sur le 'Timée'*, ed. André J. Festugière (Paris, 1968), vol. 5, pp. 172; 294:22–295:14. For the Greek see Proclus, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, ed. Ernest Diehl (Leipzig, 1906), vol. 3, pp. 294:22–295:14.

[29] Pseudo John the Faster, *Ordo*, *PG* 88, col. 1904.

[30] P. Gautier, 'Le Chartophylax Nicéphore: oeuvre canonique et notice biographique', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 27 (1969), 174–75.

[31] See for example βιβλιοθήκη Βουλῆς ms. 83, f. 46.

the debate focused on the relationship between the human and divine natures of Christ, and the question of whether his invisible, uncircumscribable, divine nature made it impossible to depict him on images. The debate therefore directed attention to the characteristics of spiritual and corporeal natures and the relationship that existed between them. With the *gello*, the possibility of humans assuming a demonic nature also centred on the live issue of corporeal and spiritual characteristics. Writers of the time saw in the *gello* a polemical tool and thus she was drawn into the debate.

Iconoclasm provides the context for the episode concerning the *gello* which appears in Ignatios' *Life of the Patriarch Tarasios*. The chief protagonist is not Tarasios, but his father George, a supporter of icons (iconophile), who served the iconoclast emperors Leo III (717–741) and Constantine V. Several women had been brought before George's court accused of being *gelloudes* and, while in the guise of spirits, killing children. George acquitted these women, arguing that a body could not be 'dissolved' into a spirit, that is, a human being could not become a *gello* or any other kind of demon.[32] He arrived at his decision after considering the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures. Even Christ, when he appeared after his death, was not purely spirit; his human nature continued to co-exist with his divine one. The Apostle Thomas could touch him and place his hand into the wounds.[33] Mere humans therefore could not possibly change between wholly corporeal and wholly spiritual natures.

The story about the *gello* was included in the *Life* of the Patriarch Tarasios in order to drive home a point about Iconoclasm. Ignatios was trying to establish the 'pedigree' of the future iconophile patriarch, Tarasios, through a tale which demonstrated the iconophile credentials of his father. George's iconophile reasoning is implicit in

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[32] Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

[33] The iconophile angle to the argument is confirmed by George's use of the quotation "truth is a spirit, that has no flesh and bones" which alludes to an iconophile argument in the writings of Theodore the Stoudite. It also refers back to Luke 24:39 ("Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see; no ghost has flesh and bones as you can see that I have."), Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, p. 211. See also John of Damascus, *De strygibus*, where again the *gello* is pulled into the iconoclast controversy. Although this text may not have been written by John of Damascus, it still shows how popular beliefs could be drawn into doctrinal disputes. On the authorship of this text, see the notes by Jean Gouillard in Paul Lemerle, *Prolégomènes à une édition critique et commentée des «conseils et récits» de Kékauménos* (Brussels, 1960), pp. 109–113.

his judgement. Iconophiles and iconoclasts disagreed about the nature of Christ after the resurrection. While the iconophiles argued that Christ's human nature remained intact, the iconoclasts believed that Christ was now purely divine and of spiritual substance. His body had 'dissolved' into spirit alone.[34] This, George implied, meant that the iconoclasts must believe in such creatures as the *gello*. Indeed, George was hauled up in front of 'the ruler', Constantine V, to account for his decision because, Ignatios writes, the iconoclast emperor "actually gave credence to these fantasies."[35] The tale associates the iconoclast position with a popular practice which theologians on both sides would reject. Thus Ignatios' account of the *gello* attempts to ridicule the iconoclast position by putting it on a level with popular practices and showing that it admits such absurdities as transformation between corporeal and spiritual natures.

This insult was magnified by the disdain with which certain sectors of Byzantine society viewed popular beliefs and their adherents. Allatios' dismissal of the *gello* exorcism as an 'absurdity' "by which very silly men believe that they drive off dangers presented by little old women" reflects this particular Byzantine attitude.[36] In order to discredit certain 'superstitious' beliefs, early Church Fathers such as John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa characterised them as the preserve of 'foolish old women', suggesting that only they would believe such nonsense.[37] Balsamon, the twelfth-century canonist, also used the expression 'foolish old women' to ridicule those involved in practices rejected by the church.[38] For the iconoclast emperor's ene-

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[34] The question of the effect of Christ's death and resurrection on the bond between his divine and human natures was important to the dispute over images because, the iconophiles argued, if Christ retained characteristics of his human nature after his resurrection, he could be circumscribed by virtue of this and therefore depicted on icons. It is clear that this theological position is referred to in Ignatios' account of the *gelloudes* because he writes, "When Christ said that 'truth is a spirit, that has no flesh and bones', was He regarded as a ghost by those who could certify this? Yet truly Christ Himself, who assumed true flesh and verily confirmed to his disciples that the spirit has no flesh and bones, cannot be described as a phantom with no substance. Having thus judged and made a fearless decision, George acquitted the women of these charges." See Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

[35] Ibid., pp. 172–73.

[36] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 136.

[37] Matthew W. Dickie, 'Fathers of the Church and the Evil Eye' in Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, p. 19, esp. n. 32.

[38] Marie Theres Fögen, 'Balsamon', p. 107.

mies to imply that he adhered to such popular beliefs as the *gello* was a form of abuse, simultaneously undermining his theological position and characterising him as foolish and simple minded.[39]

Protection against the Gello

Unsurprisingly, the church, which denied the existence of the *gello* and castigated those who believed in her, did not supply any protective measures specifically directed against her. Even though the exorcism required a priest to carry it out, it was not recognised by the higher ecclesiastical authorities, nor was it included in official books of church rites such as the *Euchologion* edited by Jacques Goar.[40] However, the laity still found solace in ecclesiastical rites and appropriated certain official practices to protect themselves against the *gello*. Some church rites and symbols were believed to have a general effect against all evil forces. Allatios noted that some people tried to protect their children by setting up a cross or images of Christ next to their beds.[41] These symbols of the power of Christianity scared away demons. Others used "lamps, lit before sacred images, which also light up the whole bedchamber" or censed the bedchamber to drive away demons.[42] Again, both these actions were thought to drive out evil spirits and sanctify the area. Therefore in the eyes of the laity the church did have authority over the *gello*, and of all its rites the most effective was baptism. Allatios writes in despair, "I have often wondered why the Greeks delay <baptism> until the eighth day, when they consider the waters of baptism a sovereign remedy against

[39] Paul Speck, 'Die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance' in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*. Dumbarton Oaks University, Washington, D.C., August 3–8, 1986 (New Rochelle, New York, 1986), pp. 557–58, argues that this story was made up by Ignatios. The *gello* and the Patriarch Tarasios, however, are connected in the exorcism text below, p. 102. Tarasios is one of the saints appealed to in the rite. This suggests that there may be some truth in the account. Nevertheless, even if it was fabricated, it is still relevant for our purposes: it shows how popular beliefs could be drawn into a dispute to characterise the opposing side, and, even if the court account is not literally true, it must at least have been feasible for Ignatios to have included it.

[40] Jacques Goar, *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1730; facsimile reprint, Graz, 1960).

[41] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 118.

[42] Ibid.

this evil."[43] Initiating the child into the community of the church meant that it was sheltered by the power of Christ, and demons no longer possessed the same ability to harm the child. As well as providing this general protection, Allatios makes it clear that baptism was considered a treatment specifically directed against the *gello*. Therefore, although the church provided no official protection, the laity and some members of the clergy perceived the power of the church as effective in this matter. Despite disapproving of the belief in the *gello*, the church was unable to prevent its practices and rites from becoming an essential part of popular apotropaic strategies.

Other methods employed to ward off the *gello* met with less approval from Allatios. He states scornfully that "some attach a head of garlic to cots, which they judged to be a remedy against poisonings" whereas others use red coral and things he disdains to name.[44] The Orthodox church too objected to the practice of making amulets. It castigated those who carried phylacteries made from herbs, thread, or paper containing written symbols, characters, or pentalphas which were considered by the laity to be strong and effective magical symbols.[45] Whereas icons and symbols of the cross were acceptable because the church understood their efficacy to derive from God, the amulets were not, because in this case it was the object itself which was deemed to be powerful. Use of these talismans denied the omnipotence of God, acknowledging alternative and independent sources of power in the world.

Those who employed these methods against the *gello* saw no contradiction in using both amulets and Christian rites in their struggle against the demon. That Christian rituals were considered to be compatible with other methods can be seen most clearly in the exorcism rite of the *gello*. Like baptism, exorcism utilises the authority inherent in an ecclesiastical rite. A priest was needed to perform it, and, in its purest form, the rite required that those demanding the exorcism had been baptised.[46] The exorcism rite proper comes in the second part of the text, following Sisinnios' and Sisynodoros' victory over the *gello*. As a result of this victory, they return Melitene's

[43] Ibid., II, p. 116.
[44] Ibid., IV, p. 118.
[45] N.G. Politis, "Ἐν κεφάλαιον νομοκάνονος περὶ γοητειῶν, μαντειῶν καὶ δεισιδαιμονιῶν', *Λαογραφία* 3 (1911), 387. Cf. also βιβλιοθήκη Βουλῆς ms. 83, f. 46.
[46] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι" ', 20.

child to her and also obtain from the *gello* a general safeguard against her which can be used by all parents. The exorcism harnesses the support of saints and the Virgin Mary against the *gello* to ensure that she keeps her promise not to molest the families of those performing the exorcism. This protection is requested in the form of a prayer:

> Therefore I pray, my Lady, for your swiftest aid, so that the children of these your servants N and N may grow up, and that they may live and give thanks in the sight of the Lord for all the days of their lives. Thus let it be, my Lady.
>
> Listen to me, a sinner and unworthy servant and although I am a sinner, do not despise my poor and miserable prayer but protect the children of your servants and let them live and send the Angel of Light so that he may protect and defend them from all evil, from wicked spirits, and from fiends which are in the air, and do not let them be singled out by other <demons> and by the accursed *gylo* lest harm comes to them and to their children.[47]

The prayer appeals for angelic protection and the aid of the Virgin Mary to ward off the *gello*. The two names of the parents, for whom the exorcism is said, are inserted in the places denoted by 'N' and 'N', directing the attention of the heavenly hosts to their need.

However, the text also admits other sources of power. Recognising she is beaten, the *gello*, pleads,

> I beseech you, saints of God, do not vex me any longer, and wherever this talisman may lie, I shall not enter, and when it is on a bed, I shall not enter but flee, and I shall hurry sixty stades away. If anyone writes my twelve names, I shall not damage nor attack his house, nor shall I destroy his animals, and I shall not have power over his limbs.[48]

The power to keep the *gello* away inheres in a material object, the talisman. At this point in the text one manuscript inserts a series of symbols, presumably the magic talismans that the church objected to in the *nomokanones*.[49] The names of the *gello* are also a source of protection. When the saints have captured the *gello*, they torture her and demand that she puts an end to her persecution of Christians. She replies by providing them with a list of names which gives the possessor power over her. The list differs in each redaction, although

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[47] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 132.
[48] Ibid., VII, p. 136.
[49] National Library of Athens, ms. 1265, f. 58v.

strangely in Allatios' second version of the exorcism the names have been omitted.[50] However, Allatios' first text continues:

> Then the holy men said, "Tell us accursed gylo, your accursed names as quickly as possible, before we destroy you savagely". And she said, "My first name is *Gylo*, my second *Morrha*, my third *Byzo*, my fourth *Marmaro*, my fifth *Petasia*, my sixth *Pelagia*, my seventh *Bordona*, my eighth *Apleto*, my ninth *Chomodracaena*, my tenth *Anabardalea*, my eleventh *Psychoanaspastria*, my twelfth *Paedopniktria*, the half *Strigla*."[51]

The *gello* lists the names with great reluctance for the saints Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, and humanity in general, can exert authority over her if they possess her names. The *gello* is aware of this and only reveals them when forced to do so by their beating:

> The accursed *gylo* begged the saints, "Leave me alone, Sysinios and Synidoros (sic), and so that you will not utterly kill me, I will tell you what must be done to prevent me entering that place."[52]

The reluctance to divulge a name is a characteristic of demons because of the power it gives to the possessor. This can be seen most clearly in the demonological text, the *Testament of Solomon* where a demon protests, "If I tell you my names I will not only bind myself, but the legion of demons under me as well".[53] It is significant that here, and in the *gello* exorcism, evil spirits are forced to reveal their names themselves. In doing so, they are not only providing the names, but also acknowledging the relationship between the names and their identity. In the early modern exorcism discussed by Louis Delatte, the demons pretend that they are not touched by the rite because the priest had not cited their names.[54] The name provides a point of contact, and so a gateway to the other being. Verbal like physical contact can exert a great force. This is also apparent from

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[50] For a comparison of the different lists of names for the *gello* see Greenfield, *'Gylou'*, 124–38.

[51] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 131. On the meanings of these names see Paul Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris* (Strasbourg, 1922), pp. 21–23.

[52] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 131.

[53] C.C. McCown (ed.), *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig, 1922), p. 107. An English translation based on the text of McCown can be found in D.C. Duling, 'The Testament of Solomon,' in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (London, 1983), pp. 935–87; Stewart, *Demons*, p. 284, n. 5.

[54] Louis Delatte, *Un Office byzantine d'exorcisme: Ms. de Lavra du Mont Athos* (Brussels, 1957), p. 120. See also ff. 42v; 63; 67v; 90; 90v.

examples relating to other *exotika.* The *vrykolakas,* or revenant, calls out the names of men and if a "man replies, it means that he is done for, and will die the next day. If he does not reply, he is safe."[55] If the man answers to his name, he allows the *vrykolakas* to establish contact, which the *vrykolakas* uses to kill the man. If this contact is not made, the man escapes, even though the *vrykolakas* knows his name for in this case the demon has no access to his being. Thus the *gello's* acknowledgement of her names is vital to the tale. It is that which gives power to those possessing them.

On a human level, naming helps to identify the threat, confers knowledge about it and makes it easier to ward off. Naming enables people to classify and label the immense host of demonic forces ranged against them and to bring them within a human framework of knowledge. Stewart concludes from his work on modern Greece that "the demons themselves tend toward entropy and indistinguishability. To succeed in naming them at all is to exercise control over them".[56] The same principles can also be seen at work in the *gello* exorcism. The saints are beseeched to protect the servant of God "from the host of undifferentiated demons and from the execrable *gylo*", who herself possessed the name '*Apleto*' meaning boundless or limitless.[57] Names can give concrete form to the individual's experience and present the threat in a manageable form. The very process of identification implies the possession of some knowledge about the subject. In the case of humans, the names themselves provide this information. The surname, and often the forename, ties the individual to a family group and in the past the surname might also have indicated the area of origin or profession. Formal names help to place the individual within a social structure; nicknames on the other hand, can reveal aspects of the personality.[58] Most names impart information of some kind. The names of spirits are often derived from the effect they have on their victims or perhaps from their

[55] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 142.
[56] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 215.
[57] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 136.
[58] For a discussion of naming patterns in seventeenth-century Naxos see Aglaia E. Kasdagli, 'Gender Differentiation and Social Practice in Post-Byzantine Naxos' in John J. Yiannias (ed.), *The Byzantine Tradition After the Fall of Constantinople* (London, 1991), pp. 69 ff.; and for modern day Naxos: Charles Stewart, 'The Role of Personal Names on Naxos (Greece)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 19 (1988), 151–59.

number. Some demons are called 'deaf' or 'mute', others, like the biblical demon, are called 'Legion'.[59] The *gello's* names also supply details about her origins and her actions.[60] Each one describes a different aspect of her character or behaviour. She is called '*Anapletos*' or 'innumerable', 'boundless', a typical characteristic of demons. '*Paedopniktria*' or 'child suffocator' describes her behaviour, as does '*Petasia*', 'she who strikes'. Her origins or place of abode are given in '*Byzo*', a contraction of '*Abyzou*', which Barb traces to '*abyssos*', the abyss. '*Abyssos*' was often used to denote the deep, wild sea, closely associated with evil spirits and '*Pelagia*' carries the same kind of connotations.[61] Greenfield notes that the *gello* and other female demons have a particular affinity with water, and the association with the sea suggested by the *gello's* names is borne out by her behaviour.[62] In one text she flees to the sea and is captured by the seashore.[63] In another, the saints are warned by the olive tree: "Saints of God, continue your journey as quickly as possible, for she is approaching the seashore", implying that the saints must catch her before she arrives at the water.[64] Names therefore are closely associated with the person or object named and the Greek term '*onoma*' (name) also implies this, as it refers to the whole person and not the name alone.[65]

The act of naming inevitably carries with it a process of individuation and separation. Names separate people, objects and concepts from an undifferentiated mass, creating boundaries between the thing named and its surroundings. That which is named is finite and discrete. This has implications for the exorcism rite of the *gello*. When the *gello* is banished, the text lists all the places from which she is to leave. She promises that she will not enter the church, nor the house, nor the wife, nor the children of the person who possesses the prayer, and in another text even the animals and limbs of the servant of God are listed.[66] Each of these elements is marked off, as

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[59] Matthew 8:31–21; Mark 5:9; 15; Luke 8:30. See also McCown, *Testament*, 11:3, p. 40.

[60] Delatte, 'Contribution', 232 places the *gello* in a class of demons that owe their names to their functions and activities.

[61] Barb, 'Antaura', 5, n. 44. Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*, p. 22; Barb, 'Antaura', 17.

[62] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 185.

[63] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 136.

[64] Ibid., VII, p. 130.

[65] Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*, p. 22.

[66] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, pp. 131; 136.

if in a contractual agreement, for it is feared that any place not cited is still open to attack. The times of day are also specified in this way. The *gello* may not attack "either during the day or at night, either in the middle of the night, or in the middle of the day".[67] The same principle comes into force when it comes to her names. Each one defines a particular aspect of her character and all aspects must be labelled or the *gello* will not be fully exorcised.[68] The catalogue of names and places represents an attempt to provide a comprehensive exorcism that exerts total power over the *gello*.

Just as the names themselves are imbued with a magical force, so too is their number. In Allatios' texts the *gello* has twelve or twelve-and-a-half names. Twelve is a significant number in Christianity, relating to the twelve Apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel, which constituted the chosen people, a mantle the Christians claimed after the resurrection. In other places the *gello* claims to have seventy-two names. Seventy two, Georgios Spyridakis suggests, represents the total number of tribes or peoples present on the earth. When the *gello* is cast out using her seventy-two names, this signifies enforced exile from the peoples of the earth.[69] Similarly, an exorcism using her twelve names banishes her from the new chosen people, that is, Christians. Her exile is signified in some exorcisms by her expulsion to uninhabited areas at the margins of the earth. In one case she is sent "across the earth, beyond the mountains" because mountains and seas were associated with the boundaries of civilisation.[70] Finally, the half name also has magical significance, the fraction making the number of names as precise as possible.[71] Thus the number of the names provided is extremely important and adds to the efficacy of the exorcism.

The power of the name is also tapped in the final prayer, where a list of saints is called upon to cast out the *gello*:

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[67] Ibid., p. 131.

[68] Delatte, 'Contribution', 232 argues that a form of the plural 'αἱ γελλοῦδες' can be explained by the number of hypostases of the *gello* symbolised by the different names.

[69] G.K. Spyridakis, ''Ο ἀριθμὸς ἑβδομήκοντα δύο' in *Ἀφιέρωμα εἰς Κ. Ἰ. Ἄμαντον* (Athens, 1940), pp. 409–18.

[70] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 122; Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 164 ff.

[71] Fritz Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* (Giessen, 1907), pp. 73; 78. See also Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 104, where not only whole demons, but also fractions are invoked.

> I adjure you, through the name of God, which the rock heard and split. God of Saint Mamantis, Saint Polycarp, Saint Tarasios, Saint Domitios, the Saint and Martyr Panteleemon, and Hermolaos, Saint and Martyr Niketas, Saint Babylas, Saint Porphyrios, Saint Blasios, Saint Eulogios, Saint Nicholas, Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Leo, Saint Eleutherios, Saint Demetrios, Saint George, Saint Theodore, Saint James of Persia, Saint John the Prophet, Precursor and Baptist; of Saint John the Theologian, Saint Orestes, Saint Andrew, the 318 Saints of the Fathers,[72] the Doctor Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saint Epiphanios, Saint Irenarchos, Saint and Martyr Auxentios, Eugenios, Orestes, Mardarios, and Lucia the Virgin and the Holy Martyrs Pegasios, Aphthonios, Elpidiphoros, and Anempodistos, of our very praiseworthy Lady Mother of God and always Virgin Mary, and all the saints. Amen.[73]

The particular saints contained in each list vary, allowing holy men of local significance to be included. The saints were chosen for their expertise, for not all possessed the ability to pursue and dominate evil spirits.[74] For some, however, fighting demons became a speciality: Auxentios was a renowned 'eater' of demons and Saint Marina was famous for her aquatic struggle with the devil, which is particularly pertinent because of the affinity of *gello* with water. A number are doctor saints, important because of the association of the *gello* with certain childhood sicknesses, and particular attention should be paid to the presence of St Eleutherios who was traditionally called upon to ensure safe childbirth.[75] Christ's warriors, the soldier saints, are frequently listed and are often depicted fighting a dragon, a symbol of diabolic power.[76] Given the relevance of the *gello* to the iconoclast dispute, it is extremely interesting that a number of iconophile and Chalcedonian saints are included in the list, in particular the Patriarch Tarasios.[77]

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[72] Lit. "τῶν ἁγίων τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἁγίων πατέρων".

[73] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 136.

[74] Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 121, where he states that different angels have authority over different demons. See also McCown, *Testament*, 8:3–10, pp. 32–33; Michael Psellos, *Démonologie populaire — démonologie critique au XI^e siècle: la vie inédite de S. Auxence*, ed. P.-P. Joannou (Wiesbaden, 1971), p. 22.

[75] Amongst the doctor saints in this list are Cosmas and Damian, St Blasios, St Panteleemon, St Hermolaos.

[76] E.g. St Theodore the Recruit, St George, St James the Persian.

[77] St Tarasios, St Leo, St Auxentios, St Eulogios. It was the Council of Chalcedon (451) that laid down the doctrine of the hypostatic union of Christ's human and divine natures. Christ was both God and man; the divine word incarnate and the

In addition to selecting and identifying those who were suitable for the job, the naming of saints served another purpose. The very first sentence of the prayer above states the formidable power unleashed by pronouncing a holy name: the rock split at the mere mention of God's name.[78] At first sight the prayer appears to take the form of a request. The afflicted individual implores the saints to come to his aid against the demonic strength of the *gello*. However, it was an attempt not merely to request their aid but to oblige them to give it. By listing the names the individual was commanding the ranks, summoning them forth against the demonic threat. This approach, of course, is completely at odds with the official understanding of the relationship between saints and supplicants. It would be strange, however, if the power contained in lists of names was not also understood as playing a role in persuading the saints to join forces against the *gello*. Attempts to force the Virgin Mary and the saints to provide aid occurred frequently in Byzantine and Ottoman Orthodoxy. A late seventeenth-century traveller describes how the Chians dealt with their saints. Sometimes the miracle-working icon of St Anthony of Padua, which was situated in the chapel at Nea Moni, was sullen and did not supply the miracles the parishioners requested but:

> a few sharp Lashes about the Shoulders usually cures him of the Spleen. But when the Distemper is very stubborn, and the Dose of the Whip proves ineffectual, they either turn him out of his Lodging, and make him lie abroad in the Wind and Rain, or dip him ten or twelve times in Water, with a great Stone at his Neck, which always produces the desir'd effect.[79]

The tale testifies to the fact that worshippers had no qualms about compelling the saint to do their will. If the saint was not obliging, the worshippers would turn to alternative methods and go to extraordinary lengths to encourage the saint to fulfil their needs.

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humanity of Christ were both central to the achievement of the resurrection. It is significant that the passage in Luke 24:39 (see nn. 33–34 above), which occurs in Ignatios' account of the *gello*, was used in the *Tome* of Pope Leo I (440–61) to demonstrate the continuing humanity of Christ after the resurrection. Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

[78] This is perhaps an interpretation of Jeremiah 23:29 where he says of the words of the Lord: "Are they not like a hammer that splinters rock?"

[79] Jean du Mont, *A New Voyage to the Levant: Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta and Turkey* (London, 1702), p. 189.

Despite the deliberate omission of any rite against the *gello*, official church tomes and ecclesiastical ceremonies were interpreted as efficacious against all evil, and therefore also against the *gello*. Baptism in particular was seen as providing refuge against her because of its ability to extend the protection of Christ and his church, but the power inherent in the ecclesiastical rite of exorcism was also appropriated by the laity. Those who faced the threat of the *gello* saw no contradiction in using both Christian ecclesiastical rites and talismans which had been outlawed by the church. Moreover, the laity approached those aspects of faith rejected by formal Orthodoxy in the same way as practices which were more acceptable. Saints, like demons, often had to be compelled to do their will. In employing protection against the *gello*, as in the perception of her nature, popular ideas were not restricted by the conceptions of the official church.

Thus Allatios' sources reveal the way in which the *gello* fitted into Greek popular beliefs. His selection also touches on the relevance of the *gello* for Iconoclasm, an ecclesiastical dispute that had at its centre the question of the relationship between body and spirit. Allatios treats the attribution of the crimes of the *gello* to 'little old women' as absurd.[80] Indeed, the Catholic West, like the iconophiles in the East, held firmly to the Chalcedonian position on the natures of Christ. This position outlawed the *gello* because it insisted that human nature could not be 'dissolved' into a spiritual nature. Allatios thus acts like a good ecumenist in selecting texts which follow the iconophile interpretation. This ecumenical concern, which is only hinted at here, becomes clearer in the next chapter where Allatios' comments on the relationship between baptism and the *gello* are investigated.

[80] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 136.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *GELLO* AND BAPTISM

Birth in the seventeenth century was an extremely risky procedure in East and West. Although there are no statistics, death in childbirth was far more common than today for both mother and child and the mortality rates for young children were much higher.[1] Women often had to give birth in very harsh circumstances. Bernard Randolph, who travelled through the East in 1670, describes how a pregnant woman went out to the fields with one child in the morning, returning in the evening with two, having given birth during the day.[2] The dangers of parturition are also apparent in the work of Sonnini, an eighteenth-century traveller with a particular interest in medical practices. He gives an account of a labour scene and the precautions that followed it. As soon as the woman felt her contractions the midwife attending pressed down hard on her stomach until the pain passed and then the woman began walking up and down the room again. At the moment of delivery the woman was placed on a birthing stool. When the child had appeared and had been separated from the afterbirth, the woman was bumped up and down on the chair until her delivery was complete. After this she was bandaged morning and night with cloths soaked in spices and alcohol from just below the breast to the top of the pelvic bones. Sonnini evaluated the procedures from the standpoint of current western practice and was extremely critical. The agitation of the woman on the birthing stool, presumably to aid the expulsion of the afterbirth, would increase the bleeding and was especially dangerous. He was equally disapproving

[1] Angeliki E. Laiou, 'The Role of Women in Byzantine Society', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31 (1981), 236, assumes that only 50% of peasant children survived the first five years of life; Thomas Munck, *Seventeenth-Century Europe: State Conflict and the Social Order in Europe 1598–1700* (London, 1992), p. 100 relates that in France during the early modern period a quarter of all children died before their fifth birthday.

[2] Bernard Randoph, *The Present State of the Islands in the Archipelago, Sea of Constantinople and the Gulf of Smyrna. With the Islands of Candia and Rhodes* (Oxford, 1687), pp. 41–42.

of the binding of the mother, which, according to western medical authorities, would lead to inflammation of the womb.[3]

This perilous process provides the context for the *gello*. The *gello* attacked during the period of confinement and the sources identify newly-born children as particularly at risk from her activities. Many modern writers have suggested that the *gello* was used to explain the death of new-born babies — it is the 'demon of cot deaths'.[4] There is, of course, some truth in this proposal. Without the high mortality rate there would be no need to account for the death of young children by recourse to the activities of the *gello* and, consequently, in modern times instances of the demon have declined; but this explanation does not tell the whole story. Popular beliefs do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of a system of ideas with which people think about the world. Developments in concepts and practices can have an impact upon these beliefs and mould the form they take. Just as theological concepts can limit or shape a belief, so changes in other areas of life can affect attitudes towards demons. The *gello* is one element in the network of beliefs and practices surrounding the process of childbirth, that was directed towards integrating the mother and new-born child into human society and facilitating their future health and happiness. In particular, baptism, the Christian rite of initiation, enacted the introduction of the child into the heavenly and earthly communities. Allatios notes the close relationship that existed between the popular understanding of the *gello* and baptism. In fact, he reveals that it was the most effective protection against the demon, giving the most fundamental of sacraments a place in popular practices. Whilst the period of danger for the child and mother begins with natural birth, baptism brought this period to a close. Thus ideas concerning childbirth and the physical and religious entrance of the child into the community are extremely important for understanding the *gello*.

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[3] C.S. Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Travels in Greece and Turkey* (London, 1801), vol. 2, pp. 80–95.

[4] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 124; 140 argues that the *gello* stories were a way of understanding an affliction in concrete terms and helped people to deal with the situation.

The Gello *and the Power of Baptism*

Through baptism, God's power to guide and protect is extended over the child. This process begins on the day of birth, even before baptism itself. The prayer on the first day of the child's life requests: "Grant that the child that hath been born of her may do reverence to the earthly temple which thou hast prepared to glorify thy holy Name."[5] The emphasis continues in the sacrament of baptism itself. A prayer at the start of the ceremony states the loving care that the baptizand might expect to receive from God. The priest intones: "I lay my hand upon thy servant, N, who hath been found worthy to flee unto thy holy Name, and to take refuge under the shelter of thy wings."[6] This safeguard depends on the child's introduction to God and initiation into the community. The earlier prayers look forward to baptism and the commencement of the child's participation in worship. They also extend the protection of Christ to the child, although this is only achieved in its fullest extent once the group of rites has been completed.[7]

Baptism therefore is significant for the community, which welcomes a new member through the rite, as well as to the baptizand. The position of the child with respect to both the community (which after all is the church in its broadest sense) and Christ is illustrated by his/her physical proximity to the altar. As the child moves towards baptism, he/she also moves closer to the sanctuary, the holiest place in the church. At birth the prayers for the child are said at home. On the eighth day the child is brought to the door of the church and sealed with a cross. On the fortieth day, prior to baptism, the child is exorcised at the door of the church before he/she is carried across the threshold. The progress of the infant, both into the community of the church and towards Christ, is most clearly expressed in the rite of churching, which follows baptism. Carrying the baby, the priest begins at the door of the church and then crosses the threshold after which he moves into the middle of the church. From

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[5] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Isabel F. Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (New York, 1922), p. 266.

[6] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 271.

[7] In his study of modern Greece, Stewart argues that baptism is particularly effective against the *exotika* and that those who are not baptised 'properly' are more likely to see them or be attacked by them; *Demons*, p. 151.

there he carries the child to the door of the sanctuary. Finally, if the child is a boy, he is carried into the sanctuary itself. At each stage the priest pronounces the words, "The servant of God, N, is churched: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."[8]

The ceremony of baptism also brings the child under the protection of God. Before the rite starts, the child is sealed with a cross. The importance of the seal, which can be explained as a 'badge of ownership', is clear in the rites of exorcism. It marks candidates out as "those who are being prepared for the holy illumination".[9] These phrases announce to the evil powers that the baptizand belongs to God, and through baptism the individual also gains the right to participate in the other sacraments. Moreover, popular beliefs and rituals also recognise the important initiatory role of baptism. Many popular exorcisms are firmly located within a Christian context and some rites contain the proviso that they will only be effective for those within the Christian sphere. The exorcisms of the *gello* stress the Christian nature of the family and the saints order the *gello* to "put an end . . . to the killing of infants of Christians".[10] It is only Christians who are protected by the exorcism. The parents of the child are also referred to consistently as 'servants of God'. In these popular rituals baptism, with its surrounding rites, is the entrance and base of Christian life and all subsequent sacraments and rites depend upon it.

Certain elements within baptism give it a special force against demons and evil spirits. Three exorcisms are included within the ceremony. These stress the power of God against the devil and his demons. The first exorcism is directed against the devil and requests "may the Lord rebuke you, devil, who came into the world, and dwelled among men in order to liberate them by the removal of your tyranny."[11] In this exorcism, death is equated with the tyranny of the devil and the rite reveals how Christ's death on the cross vanquishes both death and the devil. Christ's historic victory over death

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[8] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 270.

[9] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 271; trans. in Henry Asgard Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology and Drama* (London, 1985), p. 165; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 272.

[10] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 130.

[11] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 276; trans. in Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 164; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 272.

is re-enacted with each baptism and makes manifest the power of God in the present. God exercises this power through his church, and enables the priest to exorcise the devil from the catechumen. Reminding the devil of the power of Christ, the priest forbids him from approaching at any hour of the day and commands him to depart from the "newly sealed, newly chosen soldiers of Christ our God".[12] This exorcism depends upon the earlier rites, for the candidate is recognised as already marked out and sealed.

The second exorcism builds upon the first and widens its target, calling upon the devil and all his assisting powers to leave the baptizand. A parallel is drawn between Christ's expulsion of demons into the Gadarene swine in the Biblical past and the priest's expulsion through Christ of the devil in the present.[13] The devil himself is identified with the demons in the swine, and so Christ's irresistible power over demons in both past and present is stressed. Then the power of Christ and God is called upon once again and all are reminded of the imminent punishment of the devil. The third exorcism broadens the scope still further, asking Christ to "seek for, search out and drive from them all the operations of the devil. Rebuke the evil and unclean spirits and cast them out".[14] Demons that cause illnesses are included in this list for God is referred to as "healer of every disease and every illness."[15] Finally, the exorcisms are brought to a close with a prayer in which reference is made to future protection from attacks of the devil: "Join to his life a shining angel to deliver him from every snare of the adversary, from the onslaught of evil, from the noonday demon, from evil phantasms."[16]

In using baptism to ward off the *gello*, the laity was accessing the power of the church to deal with a problem in everyday life. The exorcism rite directed against the *gello* indicates that she was perceived as an evil demon opposed to God, to be combatted by his forces. In common with baptismal exorcisms, the *gello* texts include general statements about the power of God over his opponents, and the two also share certain features which would allow baptism to be

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[12] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 276; trans. in Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 164; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273.
[13] Matthew 8:28–32.
[14] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 277; trans. in Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 166; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273.
[15] Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 166.
[16] Ibid.

incorporated within the set of popular strategies for dealing with the demon. The baptismal exorcisms reveal the danger posed by demons to the non-baptised who lie outside God's protection, indicating the particular vulnerability of the new-born child. At the same time, they stress the power of God against all unclean spirits. The exorcisms of baptism are not directed specifically against the *gello*, but do assert their power over every 'impure spirit', '*akátharton pnevma*'. Therefore the *gello* is included in the forces banished by the baptismal rite, for in the popular exorcism she is explicitly referred to as '*akátharton pnevma*'.[17]

The baptismal and *gello* exorcisms also share certain ideas about demons. In baptism as in the exorcism of the *gello*, certain deserted areas of the earth are considered to be inhabited by demons and the two rites expel evil spirits to the margins of the world. In both texts certain parts of the day are viewed as especially threatening: the demons of midday and midnight are mentioned. Moreover, they both recognise the power of angels to guide and protect from demons. The baptismal rite asks that a 'shining angel' be provided to guide the convert in his new life while the *gello* exorcism requests God to send a 'shining angel' to guard and defend children from all evil.[18] Finally, the emphasis on the universal power of Christ over the devil and demons makes it clear how baptism came to be seen by the laity as a remedy for the *gello*: the *gello* was an evil power and therefore associated with the devil. As such, baptism had great power over her. Furthermore, baptism stresses not just the initial safeguard against demons, but a continuing protection, for it places the baptizand under the auspices of the all-powerful God. From baptism onwards the child is located within the Christian community and is included within a network of supernatural alliances.

Allatios' Understanding of the Relationship between the Gello *and Baptism*

Given the vulnerability of the newly born to these evil forces and the blanket of protection afforded by baptism, Allatios' surprise at the delay of baptism seems understandable. Whereas the Catholic

[17] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 133.

[18] Ibid., p. 132. Often in exorcism texts particular angels are assigned power over individual demons. See McCown, *Testament*, 8:3–10, pp. 32–33.

church baptised as soon as possible after birth, he notes that the Orthodox church deliberately waited eight days before performing the ceremony. Allatios' observation is supported by reports from numerous travellers to the East. The Anglican chaplain Thomas Smith comments "they seldom either defer it beyond the eighth or tenth day, or hasten it before, unless in the case of violent sickness, and for fear of sudden death."[19] The observant botanist Tournefort and the sympathetic English consul Rycaut concur.[20] However, if Allatios was shocked by this delay, he would have deplored even more that described by Georgirenes, archbishop of Samos who records that "Children ordinarily are not Baptiz'd till 40 days after Birth".[21] Similarly, in the *Euchologion* of Goar it is assumed that the child will not be baptised until the fortieth day.[22] These two dates for baptism also existed throughout the Byzantine period and both are supported by a biblical precedent: the eighth day can be traced back to the circumcision and naming of Christ, whereas the fortieth coincides with the presentation of Christ at the temple.[23] The *Novels* of the Emperor Leo VI (886–912) comment on the two days, preferring the fortieth day, but allowing the eighth as an alternative.[24]

It should be remembered that the actual baptism is only part of a process which begins on the day of the birth and continues after the triple immersion of baptism with chrismation and the cutting of the hair. The rites as a whole are referred to in Greek by the verb 'φωτίζομαι' (*fotizomai*), indicating a process of enlightenment as distinct from 'βαπτίζομαι' (*vaptizomai*), which refers to the ceremony of baptism itself. The set of rites marks out a period of transformation and, in the forty-day scheme, the eighth day retains its significance as the naming day.

Allatios' comments on the lack of urgency surrounding baptism seem very pertinent but, as with all of his interpretations, one must

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[19] Smith, *Greek Church*, p. 109.

[20] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, pp. 96 ff.; Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 161.

[21] Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

[22] It is clear from the rite in Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 268, that baptism was to follow the rite of churching on the fortieth day.

[23] Jane Baun, 'The Fate of Babies Dying Before Baptism in Byzantium', *Studies in Church History* 31 (1994), 117.

[24] A. Dain, and P. Noailles (eds.), *Les Novelles de Léon VI le Sage* (Paris, 1944), novel XVII, p. 68. See also Jean Darrouzès, 'Les Réponses de Nicolas III à l'Évêque de Zétounion' in J. Chrysostomides (ed.), *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th Birthday* (Camberley, 1988), p. 337 where this prescription is repeated.

treat his statements carefully. Rather than accepting them at face value, a deeper investigation is required to assess his understanding of the beliefs involved. Allatios' remark suggests that the Greeks should move their baptism forward, closer to the time of birth, precisely because of its effectiveness against the *gello*. Their failure to do so he ascribes to an over-zealous attachment to tradition, which he regards as no good reason:

> They prefer to spend long hours in vigils and manifest peril than to curtail the severity of the custom in the slightest. Thus do they love what is theirs! Although they have made almost innumerable changes to such strict observations, as they themselves publicly declare, they most unwisely neglect <to make a change which would be> so useful and convenient in the case of an evil that is so manifest.[25]

It was, however, the official church which laid down the proper time that baptism should take place, and, as discussed earlier, it castigated the laity for believing in the *gello*.[26] It was not the church which considered baptism efficacious against the dreadful *gello*, but the laity who had given a place to the ecclesiastical rite amongst their many remedies. This being so, it is hardly surprising that the church showed no interest in moving the ceremony. Allatios has confused the lay and ecclesiastical beliefs surrounding the *gello*.

This might seem to be a harsh criticism of Allatios. After all, his statement is just a flippant comment at the end of a chapter; but it takes on new significance when placed in the context of the debate over baptism. The Orthodox and Catholics disagreed over the proper method of baptism: should the baptizand be totally immersed three times, as the Orthodox believed, or was the Catholic practice sufficient, where the candidate was infused with water three times on the brow.[27] Although the dispute over the validity of Catholic and Orthodox baptism did not come to a head until the eighteenth century, already in the seventeenth there were reports of Greeks rebaptising Latins, and Latins rebaptising Greeks.[28] This was a serious dispute: if the baptism of the other party was not recognised, it also invalidated all the other sacraments which depended upon it.

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[25] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 116.

[26] Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη*, p. 248. Cf also βιβλιοθήκη Βουλῆς ms. 83, f.46v; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 705, pp. 455–56.

[27] When the child is infused, water is poured over the forehead.

[28] Ware, *Argenti*, pp. 67 ff.

As his other writings reveal, Allatios was a passionate ecumenist, often criticised for softening the differences between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, although he was aware of the customs and what were generally regarded as points of doctrine that kept them apart.[29] Why then does he draw attention to the differences over baptism? Baptism is drawn into his discussion of the *gello* because it provides a remedy against her actions. It is also a specifically Christian remedy and stands out amongst the uses of various amulets and talismans of which he disapproves. In this sense it sheds a positive light on Greek baptism. His comment indicates the power Orthodox baptism was believed to have over evil demons, a power which Allatios acknowledges because he urges the Greeks to bring the date forward. Far from dismissing the validity of Greek baptism, Allatios draws attention to its force.

Secondly, Allatios does not focus on the method by which baptism was performed, the issue which divided the two churches, but the day on which the ceremony should be carried out. Allatios saw all differences between the Orthodox and Catholic churches as arising out of divergences in custom or tradition, rather than doctrine and dogma.[30] Not everyone agreed on the date for baptism, but all would allow that it was a matter of custom rather than doctrine, and as such did not prevent the intercommunion of the two churches. Finally, in discussing the issue, Allatios selects the earlier date for Orthodox baptism: the eighth rather than the fortieth day after birth. He does not maximize the difference between the two churches. Nonetheless, he manages to reveal the problem which arises from the later date of Orthodox baptism, indicating that the Catholic model would be more efficacious. He uses the threat posed by the *gello* as an opportunity to reveal the shortcomings of the Orthodox method, while at the same time suggesting popular support for his position.

However, Allatios' discussion of the *gello* also draws in another point of variance. To a Catholic it was imperative that a child be baptised as soon as possible. Following the interpretation of Augustine, the western church believed that the human race inherited the sin

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[29] See for example the discussion in Petrus Arcudius, *De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis* (Paris, 1626), pp. 22–24. Allatios knew this work well and quotes from it in *De opin.* XXX, p. 181.

[30] Allatios, *De consens.*, col. 1100 ff.

of Adam, which was passed on through human birth. Although new-born children were innocent, they were still tainted by original sin. If they died before baptism they would be sent to limbo because of their sinful state.[31] In the seventeenth-century West, parents were encouraged to baptise their children as soon as possible, within a few days of birth. In some areas synodal statutes were laid down to the effect that parents who failed in their duty could be denied entry to the church.[32] Therefore any delay in baptism had dire consequences and was shocking to a devout Catholic.

Baptism was not so urgent in the Orthodox church due to a different understanding of the consequences of Adam's transgression. For the Orthodox, inherited sin was impossible: the sin of the individual was the result of the exercise of his/her free will against the order laid down by God. Thus the sin of Adam could not be passed down to his descendants but it remained important for explaining the fallen state of mankind. The first sin had brought the curse of mortality, and mortality brought with it the demands of the body that led individuals to sin. Although mankind did not inherit sin from Adam, the consequences of his action meant that it was impossible to avoid sinning. However, in Orthodox theology a new-born child has not yet experienced the pressures of mortality or exercised free will against God's law and is therefore without sin.[33] The Orthodox position on child baptism is explained by the fifth-century bishop Theodoret of Cyrus:

> If the only meaning of baptism were remission of sins, why would we baptise new-born children who have not yet tasted of sin? But the mystery of baptism is not limited to this; it is a promise of greater and more perfect gifts. In it are the promises of future delights; it is the type of the future resurrection, a communion with the master's Passion, a participation in His Resurrection, a mantle of salvation, a tunic of gladness, a garment of light, or rather it is light itself.[34]

The Catholic rationale for child baptism, that baptism is necessary to wash away the inherited sin that might prevent the infant from receiving eternal life, does not apply. For the Orthodox, baptism

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[31] Baun, 'Babies', p. 116.
[32] Delumeau, *Catholicism*, p. 194.
[33] John Meyendorff, *Theology*, pp. 143–49.
[34] Theodoret of Cyrus, *Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium, PG* 83, col. 512; translation from Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 194.

brings children into a relationship with Christ, extending to them the promise of eternal life.

By the seventeenth century the Orthodox position on original sin showed signs of the strong influence of the Catholic missionaries and the Greek alumni of western universities. At the Council of Jerusalem in 1672, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos, stressed the necessity of baptism to ensure the eternal life of the new-born child:

> As the Lord saith 'Whosoever is not born of water and of the Spirit, shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens.' And, therefore, it is necessary even for infants, since they also are subject to original sin, and without Baptism are not able to obtain its remission. . . . And forasmuch as infants are men, and as such need salvation; needing salvation, they need also Baptism. And those that are not regenerated, since they have not received the remission of hereditary sin, are, of necessity, subject to eternal punishment, and consequently cannot without Baptism be saved; so that even infants ought, of necessity, to be baptised.[35]

Admittedly, the purpose of the synod was to condemn the Calvinist position set out in the confession of faith of the earlier patriarch, Kyril Loukaris; therefore the focus of this passage is on the necessity of child baptism and is directed against the Protestant postponement of the rite until adulthood. Earlier treatises on the death of children, such as Gregory of Nyssa's *On Infants' Early Deaths*, avoid altogether the question of the fate of the unbaptised.[36] Nevertheless, unlike the earlier Byzantine statements on this issue, Dositheos is absolutely clear. Those dying before baptism are 'subject to eternal punishment'. Thus in the seventeenth century the Orthodox standpoint on original sin, and with it the understanding of baptism, moved towards the Catholic position. This meant that there was a growing tension within Orthodoxy between the older view of the consequences of Adam's Fall and that influenced by Catholic theology. In this context, Allatios' desire for earlier baptism takes on new significance. It is not quite as divorced from Orthodox needs and practice as might first have seemed.

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[35] Dositheos, *Synod*, pp. 139–40.

[36] Graham Gould, 'Childhood in Eastern Patristic Thought: Some Problems of Theology and Theological Anthropology', *Studies in Church History* 31 (1994), 51.

The Ambiguous Position of the New-Born Child

It is difficult to know whether the development in the understanding of baptism and original sin affected the understanding of the *gello* during the early modern period. However, there is evidence of an older conflict between the view expressed by Theodoret, that the new-born child was sinless, and one which held the non baptised to be polluted, sinful and closer to the devil than God, and so posits beliefs about the child which are closer to the Catholic position. The tension is manifest both in the baptismal rite and in popular beliefs surrounding the birth. The four exorcisms which occur during the baptismal process and the baptismal rites as a whole focus on the separation of the baptizand from his old, erroneous way of life, which was associated with the power of the devil. The first prayer asks "Remove him far from his former delusion" and the prayer following baptism reads:

> receive this creature of yours into your heavenly kingdom, having redeemed him from the servitude of the enemy; open the eyes of his mind so that the light of the Gospel may shine in him.[37]

These prayers indicate that an affiliation existed between the new-born child and the devil, and conflict with the Orthodox position on original sin.

The problem can be resolved partly by referring to the history of the rite, which dates back to the early church when most of the catechumens would have been adults. The early converts had turned away from the gods and cult practices of the Roman Empire, which the church saw as demonic, to a new life in Christ. The retention of the rite for the child, however, reveals an ambiguity in its position with respect to the church. Although the child was born sinless, this rite suggests that before its entrance into the Christian community it had an affinity with the devil. However, individual catechumens were not truly believed to be possessed, even at the time of John Chrysostom (347–407). Instead, the ceremony of exorcism dramatises the baptizands' separation from their old way of life and has an apotropaic purpose.[38] Nevertheless, the way in which the sep-

[37] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 275; trans. in Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 166; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273.
[38] Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 143.

aration is dramatised suggests that the unbaptised at the very least has some affinity with diabolic powers.

Even though the high ecclesiastics may not have understood the ritual literally, the concept of the diabolic nature of the unbaptised has a resonance in popular beliefs. The traveller Sonnini relates that the Greeks called the unbaptised child '*drako*'.[39] '*Drakon*' denotes a dragon, a serpent of huge size, or a python. The serpent has long been reviled for its association with the devil, since its temptation of Eve led to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. It is also identified with the devil or evil spirits of the devil. More specifically, it is used in certain circumstances to signify the devil vanquished by Christ, especially through Christ's baptism.[40] This meaning is particularly interesting, for the name *Drako* is replaced at baptism with the Christian name. As baptism conquers the tyranny of the devil and death, so the name *Drako* is washed away and the child is reborn with a Christian identity.

Before baptism children are threatened by demons, not only because they lie outside the full protection of God, but because their affinity with the devil attracts evil spirits. The relationship between children and the demonic is also suggested in some of the *gello* texts. In one of these the demoness is banished to the mountains to drink the blood of dragons (*drako*), the very name of the unbaptised child.[41] In another, the *gello* herself becomes a *drako* and attacks humans in this form.[42] The *gello* is attracted to the new-born child because it is comparable in nature to herself. Other similarities in names occur. In several texts the child is called *Abouzin*, which implies links with the word '*abyssos*', denoting the depths of the sea and primeval chaos, and therefore indicates the child's links to the world outside the order of God's community.[43] It also ties the child closely to the *gello* because *Abouzin* is a name which is often used for the *gello* herself.[44]

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[39] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 107; see also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 55.

[40] Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), sv '*drakon*'.

[41] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 117.

[42] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι" ', p. 422. See the quotation below in chapter 6, pp. 144–45.

[43] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 100; 107; 116; 126ff.; Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*, p. 23.

[44] Naming establishes a connection between the child and whomever it is named after, whether they come from the earthly or heavenly sphere. Just as conferring

However, even within the popular tradition, the status of the children is ambiguous rather than wholly demonic. Although they have connections to the chthonic forces, they are also joined to the Christian community through their birth to Christian parents.[45] In the *gello* exorcism, God is asked to extend his protection to the children of Christians. The protection is afforded to the child through the baptism of his/her parents. Through their faith he/she has already started along the road to Christianity, even before baptism.

This brings us back to Allatios' question: if baptism was so efficacious against the *gello*, why was there no pressure to bring it forward? Even if the official church rejected the existence of the *gello*, some popular pressure to perform the rite closer to the birth might be expected. In spite of his confusion of popular practices with those of the formal church, Allatios has identified a problem surrounding the *gello* and baptism. Admittedly Leo VI adopted into his legislation the provision that baptism should not take place until the eighth day, but urged people to wait until the fortieth day after birth, suggesting that many wanted an earlier baptism.[46] From the seventeenth century, however, there is evidence that some people delayed longer still. Georgirenes recorded that many people waited a year or more before having their child baptised.[47] Thus, people did not rush to have the ceremony performed and there was no conflict between the laity and the church on this issue; on the contrary, the church appears to have urged the population to baptise earlier, rather than restraining them. This requires an investigation into alternative factors which acted against moving baptism closer to the birth.

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the name of a saint on a child stresses the link between the two and marks the saint out as the special protector of the child, so too calling the child after the *gello* makes clear the connection between them. Naming can also infer the transfer of characteristics from one to another: a child called after her grandmother is said to be like her, even if there is no physical resemblance. See the discussion on naming in chapter 4, pp. 97–103 above and pp. 127–28 below.

[45] Alexander Schmemann, *Of Water and the Spirit: a Liturgical Study of Baptism* (London, 1976), p. 144 where the author states that in modern times, only a child born into a Christian family can be churched before baptism. The children born of Christian parents have already begun the journey to becoming Christians themselves.

[46] Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII, p. 68.

[47] Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

Birth and Pollution

In addition to the concept of 'original sin', there were other factors that affected the cosmological status of the new-born child and worked against, rather than for, an early date for baptism. In both popular and formal Orthodox traditions the mother was associated with pollution and therefore attractive to evil spirits in the period following parturition. A period of time had to pass before she was allowed to enter the church. Georgirenes asserts "a Woman after Child-birth stirs not abroad, neither to Church, nor to other Houses, till 40 days be expir'd."[48] Sometimes other members of the household could also be affected by the birth. On Samos, those present were not allowed to leave until the priest had performed sacred ceremonies.[49] Elsewhere the customs were less strict. Rather than preventing new mothers from leaving the house, they were only forbidden to enter the church.[50] In all cases, the interaction of the mother with the community of the faithful was restricted to some extent.

The pollution of the mother was indicated in prayers said on the day of the child's birth. The prayers intercede for the mother and ask that God "purify her from bodily uncleanliness, and from the divers inward troubles which assail her".[51] The others in the house are also mentioned as the prayer asks, "pardon this thy servant, N., and all the house wherein the child hath been born, and those who have touched her, and all those who are here present".[52] Birth therefore was considered by the church to be an unclean process and all those touched by it acquired polluted status. For most, this period was brief and ended with the above prayers, which restored them to full union with the Christian community. In contrast, despite the prayers, the pollution of the mother was deemed to last for forty days. At the end of this time "she is brought to the Church Door, where the Priest having said the Prayers appointed for that occasion, she is permitted to go to Church".[53] The instructions before

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., pp. 43–44.
[50] (Seigneur de) Villamont, *Les Voyages du Seigneur de Villamont, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Hierusalem* (Paris, 1600), p. 178.
[51] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.
[52] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 262; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 267.
[53] Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

the rite of churching the mother state that she must be 'already cleansed and washed', that is, already cleansed physically and spiritually before she entered the church.[54]

The same belief is present in the popular sphere. Here those present in the house at the time of birth:

> incur even a sort of stain, which deprives them of all communications with other persons, till a priest, who is apprised on this subject, has given them his blessing, and freed them from the impurity which it is fancied that they have contracted.[55]

Again, this is because the mother was a source of pollution. In this example, the mother was not confined to the house, but even after this first blessing by the priest she had to be mindful in her dealings with others. She could not:

> enter into any house, without throwing on the threshold of the door a key or any other bit of iron, on which she cannot dispense with treading, if she wish to avoid introducing with her the fatal influences with which she is supposed to be surrounded.[56]

She had to be careful not to spread the contagion, a concern also reflected in the formal ceremonies which pardoned those who had come into contact with her and had therefore become polluted.

The mother's polluted state explains why she was not allowed to receive communion during this period.[57] Prayers request that God "purify her, therefore, from all sin and from every uncleanness, as she now draweth near unto thy holy Church; and make her worthy to partake, uncondemned, of thy holy mysteries". Later on they intercede: "wash away her bodily uncleanness, and the stains of her soul in the fulfilling of the forty days. Make her worthy of the communion of thy holy Body and of thy Blood."[58] The forty-day period is here associated explicitly with purification of the mother and her impurity is related to the stains of both her soul and her body. In Orthodoxy, a reciprocal relationship exists between the two: the state of the body has implications for the state of the soul, and all the faithful have a responsibility to cleanse their souls of sin through

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[54] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 268.
[55] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 81.
[56] Ibid., p. 98.
[57] Darrouzès, 'Réponses', p. 341.
[58] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 268–69.

confession and penitence. Should the mother take communion before the forty days had passed, it was deemed a serious sin, for the worst transgression of all was to communicate unworthily.[59] However, this stricture was relaxed in cases of illness. If the mother was thought to be in extremity, she was allowed to communicate, as the Eucharist not only healed her soul in preparation for death, but also correspondingly healed her body. Nevertheless, if she recovered, she still had to do penance for communicating in an unworthy state.[60]

Although issues of pollution are often associated with sex, in this case the impurity of the body does not arise primarily from the sexual act. Indeed the prayer makes reference to the fulfilment of God's injunction to go forth and multiply.[61] Admittedly, it also states "in sin we are conceived" but in Orthodox theology, these words refer to the general condition of mankind rather than the particularly sinful nature of conception.[62] The mother's pollution occurred as a result of her bodily uncleanness and was closely related to the proscriptions dealing with menstruation, during which women were forbidden from communicating.[63] After birth, women bleed for a duration of approximately six weeks and the end of this time corresponds

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[59] Pseudo John the Faster, *Ordo*, 1905, A.

[60] Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII, pp. 64–65; Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxxviii, p. 131; canon cccxxix p. 131 suggests that purification must still occur even if the woman dies. It relates that if a woman who has not served her forty days after birth is dying and communicates, twenty-four liturgies must be said at her tomb and forty litres of water poured over it.

[61] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 262; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 267.

[62] The quotation is from Psalm 51:7 and occurs in Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266. Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 145.

[63] Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxxvii, p. 130. Patrick Viscuso, 'Purity and Sexual Defilement in Late Byzantine Theology', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57 (1991), 402 n. 14 comments on the twelfth-century *Syntagma* of Blastares which formed a major resource for Orthodox clergy until the eighteenth century: "Blastares' association of impurity with the menstrual flow is linked to his concept of blood and human birth. Man is said to provide the seed and woman, the blood, which is next made into 'formless flesh' and then is fully shaped and formed into limbs and parts'. . . . When the seed is not provided, the blood in the womb becomes superfluous and corrupt. The monthly flow is a means by which women 'purify themselves' . . . The same time of purification is said to occur in the discharge of blood after birth." See Blastares, 'Σύνταγμα κατὰ στοιχεῖον' in G.A. Rhalles and M. Potles (eds.), *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, vol. 6 (Athens, 1859), G. 28 Basil 2; G. 28 Laws. For the continuation of this understanding into the post Byzantine period see the eighteenth-century *Πηδάλιον τῆς νοητῆς νηὸς τῆς Μιᾶς Ἁγίας Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς τῶν Ὀρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησίας* (Athens, 1982), p. 548. On this work see Patrick Viscuso 'The Theology of Marriage in the *Rudder* of Nikodemos the Hagiorite', *Ostkirchliche Studien* 41 (1992), 187–207.

more or less to the forty-day period laid down by the church. It is the presence of blood which makes women unclean and unworthy of receiving the sacrament: "It is dangerous and precarious for one that is not entirely pure to approach the Holy of Holies".[64]

Just as the mother does not rejoin the community of the faithful for a period of forty days, so the child remains an outsider until its baptism on the eighth or fortieth day. The impurity of the child is not spoken of in the same way as that of the mother. For the infant there are no prayers to wipe away any bodily uncleanliness. However, as we have seen, the child does stand in an ambiguous position with respect to the church, and prayers are said to exorcise it, or cleanse it from the taint of demonic spirits. Moreover, the tie between the child and mother is recognised by the church in the first and fortieth day rites. In the former, prayers for the mother and child are interleaved: "Show mercy also upon this thy servant who to-day hath borne this child . . . and preserve the child which hath been born of her".[65] Theirs is an unbreakable reciprocal relationship. On the fortieth day the instructions preceding the rite state "on the fortieth day the Infant is brought to the Temple to be churched; that is, to make a beginning of being taken into the Church. And it is brought by the Mother."[66] The mother herself of course is also being churched. Given this close relationship, which was recognised by the church, and the contagious nature of the mother's pollution, the child too is considered polluted.[67] Thus, there is no pressure to bring baptism forward because, for both laity and clergy, the period after birth is a time of pollution and therefore not appropriate for holy activities such as baptism. The pollution which attracts the *gello* also precludes the performance of baptism.

In spite of the issues of pollution, and Allatios' scathing comments about the immovable nature of Greek traditions, the sacrament of baptism could be moved forward if a child became ill:

> Upon the least suspition of the Childs being weak, or likely to dye, the Priest is sent for by the Parents, and without any further Ceremony, the Child is Baptized in this manner.

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[64] Blastares, *Σύνταγμα*, A 16 Dionysios 2. Translation from Viscuso, 'Purity', 402 n. 14.

[65] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.

[66] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 268.

[67] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, with an introduction by Solon T. Kimball (London, 1960), p. 50.

> N.N. The servant of God doth Baptize thee, in the Name of the Father, Amen. Of the Son, Amen. And of the Holy Ghost, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen.[68]

Although, as Peter of Moghila, metropolitan of Kiev, writes "lawful Baptism must necessarily be administered by a minister of the Word", an exception is made "in Case of urgent Necessity, when any other Person, whether Man or Woman, may administer this Sacrament".[69] In this case the long rite preceding baptism is omitted and only the essentials remain: "In private Baptism they use only Water, Oyl, and a Lamp burning before the Picture of the Virgin Mary."[70] Baptism could be used as a cure for the *gello's* depredations, rather than as a talisman to ward her off.

Birth, Baptism and the Transitional Period

In anthropological terms, pregnancy and the forty day period immediately following birth are characterised as a transitional period: a period of time when an individual is undergoing a transformation from "one defined position to another which is equally well defined".[71] In Greek popular thought the child was understood to develop from its constituent parts — the sperm of the father and, in Greek medical texts, the blood of the mother — into a distinct individual, at the same time as the woman was undergoing the transformation to motherhood.[72] These transformations did not happen instantly, the moment the child was born, but took place slowly during the days or weeks following the birth, with the first, ninth and fortieth days being particularly important. Transitional or liminal states are often accompanied by issues of pollution. The pollution surrounding pregnancy and the period following birth was derived from various factors, such

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[68] Georgirenes, *Description*, pp. 44–45.

[69] Peter Moghila, *The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church, from the Version of Peter Mogila*, ed. and trans. J.J. Overbeck (London, 1898), p. 76.

[70] Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 45.

[71] van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 3.

[72] Gilbert Dagron, 'Troisième, neuvième et quarantième jours dans la tradition byzantine: temps chrétien et anthropologie' in *Le Temps Chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge III^e–XIII^e siècles*, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 9–12 March 1981 (Paris, 1984), p. 424.

as the attitudes towards sex and the presence of blood, and also the perception of the anomalous identity itself. During pregnancy the identity of the mother was confused with that of the child.[73] This confusion was gradually resolved during the liminal period, which was also a period when the pair separated from their old identities and grew into their new. This process of development and individualisation in physical and spiritual terms is apparent in both medical and ecclesiastical texts.

Texts concerning child development consider the spiritual as well as the physical growth of the child. They do not stop at birth, but trace the continuing growth of the child until baptism. The text describes the gradual physical development of the child inside the womb, as it grows into a separate entity from its constituent elements. The shape of the child slowly forms out of the seed and blood of the parents and the progress is described in stages. One such text runs as follows: when the man and the woman lie together, the woman's womb is opened up and receives the seed from the man. The womb guards the seed till the third day, when blood pours into the womb and is mixed with the seed. The mixing of the two creates something similar to a piece of flesh and the foetus remains in this state until the ninth day. On the ninth day it receives a form, but it does not receive the shape of a child or a soul until the fortieth day. In the third month it 'becomes like a child' and in the ninth month it is born. Forty days after birth he/she is taken to the church and consecrated.[74]

Various symmetrical correspondences are visible within this text.[75] Particular attention is paid to the third, ninth and fortieth days and the third and ninth months. On the third day, the mixture "becomes like a piece of meat" and in the third month "it becomes like a child". On the ninth day it receives its 'form' and in the ninth month

[73] van Gennep, *Rites*, pp. 43 ff.

[74] Karl Krumbacher, *Studien zu den Legenden des heiligen Theodosios* (Munich, 1892), p. 348.

[75] There are many points of symmetry in this text. The spiritual development mirrors the physical development, although it follows forty days later, and the development after birth mirrors that after conception. There is a symmetry between the spiritual and physical development in the case of the foetus and the decay of the body and departure of the soul in the case of the deceased. See Krumbacher, *Studien*, p. 348 and the discussion in Dagron, 'Troisième', pp. 424–25; Sorlin, 'Striges', 432–34. For a comparative schema of the intervals of decay for the deceased discussed with regard to the *vrykolakas* see chapter 7, pp. 194–95 below.

it is born. The scheme includes the spiritual development as well as the physical, however the spiritual development mirrors but does not match the physical development. The spiritual conception of the child, the arrival of the soul, takes place forty days after the physical conception, and baptism, the second birth, takes place forty days after parturition. The symmetrical correspondences of the text indicate that baptism is the 'spiritual birth', a position that is supported by theological works. Nicolas Cabasilas, a fourteenth-century theologian, states that baptism is the beginning of existence for the Christian soul, and explains that while the child receives its characteristic physical shape on the fortieth day following conception, it receives its spiritual form forty days after birth. On the day of baptism "we are modelled and configured, our unshapen and indefinite life receives a shape and a definition".[76] Before this day the soul is formless matter, such as the universe before creation, before it was shaped by the word of God.

The physical development of the foetus was also judged to be incomplete at birth and like the spiritual development, continued for another forty days. The child must be at his/her mother's breast for a full forty days after birth in order to acquire the fullness of the human form, and this was the reason given in the Novel of Leo VI for waiting for forty days before baptism.[77] In this understanding the child received the acknowledgement of its physical humanity from the community at the same time as spiritual recognition through baptism. This was in agreement with the implications of the name *drako* discussed above: until baptism on the fortieth day, the newborn child was not fully human.

A second text concerned with the growth of the child continues the analysis of its physical development until the fortieth day after birth: once children were born, they remained in swaddling clothes for three days; on the ninth day they were thought to gain strength and allow themselves to be touched and on the fortieth day they were able to smile and began to recognise their mother.[78] A progressive integration into human society can be seen here. The removal of the swaddling on the third day opened the child to the world,

[76] Nicolas Cabasilas, *La Vie en Christ*, ed. Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, 1989–1990), II.14, lines 1–5, p. 144; Baun, 'Babies', 123.
[77] Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII, p. 68.
[78] Krumbacher, *Studien*, p. 353.

and on the ninth he/she might be touched, an important action of inclusiveness.[79] The significant characteristics of humanity that reveal the child's growth are the ability to smile and recognise his/her mother. This implies the ability to interact with the outside world through facial expression and respond to external stimuli. Thus the humanity of the child depended on its ability to interact at some level with the surrounding community.

Therefore at physical birth children have not received their full physical, social or spiritual form. They do not become spiritually or physically human until forty days have passed, that is, they do not achieve an identity in their own right until baptism, but instead are closely identified with their mothers. The rites that precede baptism proper take place on the first, eighth and fortieth days and stress the connection between the child and mother. In contrast, baptism itself minimises the role of the mother and breaks the close connection between the two, also ending the confusion of identity associated with pregnancy and the six weeks following birth. It is the new birth that is important here; the birth through baptism into the body of the church. It is the baptismal sponsor who holds the child during the ceremony, and to whom the priest returns him/her after baptism.[80] Thus on the fortieth day the connection between the mother and the child is broken.

After baptism the child is no longer the child of the mother but of the church. This view, of course, does not seek to deny the mother's role in the natural birth, but rather to diminish the importance of the natural birth in comparison to the second, spiritual birth, which confers eternal, rather than merely natural and mortal life.[81] As well as receiving a spiritual rebirth at baptism, the child gains a new spiritual family through the appointment of godparents. It is to these that the child is presented after it is baptised and thus there is a movement in the ritual from the natural birth mother, through rebirth, to the new spiritual parents. The baptismal rite states, "and fill him with the power of thy Holy Spirit, in the unity of thy Christ: that he may be no more a child of the body, but a

[79] Compare the way the laying on of hands is used in the baptismal rite.
[80] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 268; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 270.
[81] Marc Bloch and S. Guggenheim, 'Compadrazgo, Baptism and the Symbolism of a Second Birth', *Man* 16 (1981), 379.

child of thy kingdom."[82] The new spiritual relationships mirror the natural ones and they are treated by the church in the same way as biological relationships. The prohibitions with respect to marriage apply to spiritual relationships as to biological and affinial ones. The penalties for transgression, however, are much more severe, in keeping with the greater significance of spiritual relationships.[83]

Both the spiritual and physical developments reveal the gradual growth of the identity of the child between the first and the fortieth day after birth. The child is slowly individualised and separated from its mother, joining the wider community, until it receives its full identity and social integration on the fortieth day at baptism. Naming, another ritual associated with the baptismal process, also helps to integrate and individuate the child.[84] A traveller of the time reports that the child is given a name at birth that refers to the time or place at which the birth occurred.[85] This is a general name and draws the child into an association with the natural world in which demons were believed to dwell.[86] At the naming ceremony, the child is introduced to God and the congregation of the faithful and receives its cultural-religious name. This separates out the child from the indiscriminate chthonic powers and is also a stage in recognising it as a distinct person, separate from the mother.

As well as individualising the child, the name ties it to the community of heaven and earth. This is well illustrated by a popular tale excerpted by Allatios. The emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) called his unborn daughter Simonis after the Apostle Simon. The name was chosen through a procedure advised by an old woman, "well-known for her experience of these things". The emperor had asked her for advice because on three previous occasions his child had died. She advised him to light twelve candles, one for each of the twelve Apostles and to name the child after the

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[82] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 278; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 275.
[83] Pseudo John the Faster, *Ordo*, col. 1904.
[84] van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 62.
[85] Eugène Roger, *La Terre Saincte; ou description topographique très-particulière des saincts lieux, et de la terre de promission* (Paris, 1646), p. 390.
[86] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 165; Charles Stewart, 'Nymphomania: Sexuality, Insanity and Problems in Folklore Analysis' in Margaret Alexiou and V. Lambropoulos (eds.), *The Text and its Margins: Post-Structural Approaches to Twentieth-Century Greek Literature* (New York, 1985), pp. 235–36.

one which burned for the longest.[87] The fact that Simon's candle continued to give out light when the others had gone out indicated that the apostle had accepted responsibility for the child and established a connection with her. The saintly connection and the protection it brought would enable Simonis to survive when her siblings had died. In this case the child was named before she left the womb and the name was essential to her protection, both individuating her and bringing her into a sphere of heavenly and earthly interaction.

The practice of naming children after saints continued into the early modern period, establishing a connection between child and saint, and appointing the saint with responsibility for the child.[88] Evidence from the notarial records on Naxos shows that naming had a tangible effect on human relationships too. Naming established a special connection between the new-born and the grandparent after whom he/she was called. This had practical consequences, for the grandchild inherited some of the property that had originally belonged to that particular grandparent.[89] In some cases, the connection also established more than just a practical relationship, facilitating the transfer of specific personal characteristics from grandparent to grandchild, suggesting a metaphysical as well as a socio-economic relationship.[90] The naming of children placed them within a network of practical, metaphysical and supernatural relationships, designed both to protect them and aid their path through life, as well as integrating them into society. In this sense the naming of a child had a similar effect to that of baptism, which, as seen above, also integrated a child into society and placed heavenly protection at its aid.

At the end of the forty-day period the danger from pollution receded. The child was now recognised as a person in his/her own right, separate from his/her mother, had obtained the protection of God through baptism, and was tied to the heavenly and earthly

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[87] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIII, pp. 169–70; George Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 3:32, pp. 276–77.

[88] Roger, *Terre Saincte*, p. 390. For naming practices in modern Greece see Michael Herzfeld, 'When Exceptions Define the Rules: Greek Baptismal Names and the Negotiation of Identity', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 38 (1982), 288–302; Stewart, 'Personal Names', 151–59.

[89] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 81. Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 286.

[90] For examples of this see Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 177; for the theory and modern day incidences see Michael Herzfeld, 'Names', 288–302.

community through his/her name. At the same time the danger from demons declined. The threat posed by the *gello* in particular was tied closely to these developments. She was thought to be particularly interested in the children's 'vital fluids', that is, their blood. There is an association between birth and blood, for this was the reason for the impurity of the mother, which was then passed on to the child. The *gello*, who 'loves children', wished to consume the fertile blood contained within the child, the blood which enabled the mother to conceive.[91] According to the medical texts, the child was formed with the seed from the father and the blood from the mother. The blood connection between mother and child continued until the child was fully separated. In one of the *gello* texts the demon would only give up the child when the saints could produce for her their mother's milk in the palms of their hands. This is not just an example of their ability to perform miracles; milk was closely associated with blood: in patristic texts human milk was thought to be blood in another form. The milk of the nursing mother was equivalent to her blood, which the *gello* wished to devour. The saints were therefore exchanging the milk of their own mother for the blood of their sister Meliltene, which was contained within the child that was stolen by the *gello*.[92] Once the child was fully individuated, the threat from the *gello* faded away. Baptism protected against the *gello* not only because it drew the child under the protection of God, but also because it separated the child from its mother, or confirmed its physical separation, making the child less attractive to the *gello*.

The discussion of the *gello* reveals the common concerns running through popular and formal Orthodox beliefs. Although the Orthodox church might reject the *gello*, there was a strong connection and interaction between popular and formal approaches to birth. They shared concerns about pollution, the threat from demons and the attainment of the identity of the child. Curiously, the actions of the *gello* mirror the rite of baptism with respect to concepts of separation and rebirth. Both the mother and Melitene, at least in most cases, are presented alone. No mention is made of any husband. Thus the role of the mother in the natural birth is stressed, and

[91] Sorlin, 'Striges', 435.

[92] I am grateful to Dr Bolman for allowing me to read her article before publication. Elizabeth S. Bolman, 'The Coptic *Galaktotrophousa* Revisited', *Proceedings of the International Association of Coptic Studies Conference 2000*, Forthcoming.

with it the exclusive relationship between the mother and child that exists immediately after birth. Baptism marks both the separation of the mother and the child, and the entrance of the infant into the Christian/cultural universe. In order to do this, baptism enacts a symbolic death after which the child is reborn and placed in the hands of its spiritual parents. In the exorcism rite the *gello* separates the child from the mother by force, stealing it and imbibing the blood, bringing about its death. Then the demoness is pursued by Melitene's two brothers who force her to return the child. These two brothers are the representatives of God, doing battle with the natural and supernatural order to retrieve the child. The *gello* of course has swallowed the child and in order to rescue the infant the saints have to force the *gello* to regurgitate it. This she does, and the child is returned to the saints alive. Death by swallowing followed by regurgitation and new life is a common feature of initiation ceremonies.[93] As in baptism, once reborn, the child is not returned in the first instance to the natural mother, but to the saints and representatives of the cultural world.

The *gello* and baptism are therefore linked in a number of ways. On the surface the connection lies in the apotropaic and exorcistic functions of baptism, which are generally applicable to all demonic spirits. At a deeper level, both depend on concepts of the development of the child and its growing distinctiveness, humanity, and separation from its mother. Finally, and peculiarly, the *gello* story itself exhibits structural similarities to the rite of baptism, in that it too can be seen in the form of an initiation rite.

It is these similarities between popular and official beliefs which meant that there was no great pressure to bring baptism forward even though the ceremony afforded protection against the *gello*. The *gello* and baptism fitted into the same scheme of development and in one sense are mutually exclusive. The *gello* attacks during the time of transition when the identities of child and mother are not clear and she desires the blood of the mother. However, baptism should not take place during the time of pollution, which results from the presence of blood, and acts to individuate the child, separating it from its mother.

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[93] Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: the Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London, 1958), p. 51.

It is this sharing of common concepts and expectations surrounding the popular and formal approach to birth that stands against Allatios' suggestion to move baptism closer to the time of birth. When he urges an earlier date for baptism, he does not appreciate the deep underlying connections between the formal Orthodox practice and the popular beliefs that surround it. Paradoxically, the problem with his suggestion lies in the fact that popular and official beliefs were both more separate and more closely connected than he realised. They differed in their approach to the *gello*, but were linked by deeper concerns about pollution. Although the church denied the existence of the *gello* and was therefore unconcerned about moving the date of baptism to provide protection from her, at a deeper level popular and formal concepts surrounding birth were in agreement. Popular and formal Orthodoxy were informed by the same understanding of the world. Allatios' Catholicism on the other hand was informed by different concepts, the overriding one being the need for the child to receive baptism as soon as possible. Catholic baptism could act against Orthodox popular beliefs in a way the Orthodox church did not, and could not, because it observed the same processes as the popular beliefs.

If Allatios' western viewpoint caused him to misunderstand the relationship between popular and official Orthodoxy in the beliefs and practices surrounding baptism, it led him to ignore altogether the richest time for popular beliefs in the life of the Orthodox faithful — marriage. The next chapter will consider the reasons for this.

CHAPTER SIX

THE *GELLO* AND MARRIAGE

In modern Greece, "the transition from unmarried to married status is socially the most important rite of passage in Greek culture".[1] The significance of the event is highlighted by the richness of the beliefs and practices which surround it. In fact, like birth and death, it is one of the three principal areas where popular beliefs are concentrated. However, while Allatios spent much time discussing the dangerous period surrounding birth (chapters II–III, VII) and death (chapters XII–XVII), he failed to mention marriage in any context. The complete absence of the subject in a text dealing with popular practice is surprising and cannot be overlooked. Why is there this striking omission? Did marriage hold the same central place for Ottoman Greeks? If so, why did Allatios ignore it, and what does the omission reveal about his selection of material and overall approach to popular beliefs?

The Importance of Marriage

Like other customs and practices in the seventeenth-century Balkans, those surrounding marriage varied greatly from area to area, island to island, and even from village to village. They existed in a dynamic environment, affected by the legal and social status of marriage, which was in turn shaped by the conflicting influences of ecclesiastical, Islamic and local customary law. The effect of each type of law varied according to the region. Where there was little Turkish settlement, as on those Cycladic Islands which were under nominal Venetian rule, Islamic law had little impact. In other places, which had a larger Islamic population and a resident kadi, the influence of Islamic law was much stronger. The ability of the laity to play off these different structures against each other affected their access

[1] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174.

to marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Excepting Aglaia Kasdagli's study of seventeenth-century Naxos, very little research has been carried out into the variety of practices surrounding matrimony during this period and a detailed comparison is not yet feasible. Although the survey presented in this chapter is necessarily impressionistic, important information can be gleaned from surviving Orthodox marriage settlements from different areas of the Balkans and from travellers' accounts and patriarchal edicts. Moreover, even allowing for local differences, certain regions, for example the Cycladic Islands, shared many social and legal customs and some general principles and trends, such as those expressed in the wedding service, were common to Orthodoxy as a whole.

In all areas the ceremony of marriage involved a transition of social identity, the service of the Orthodox church enacting a process of separation from the old social patterns and an entry into the new. The wording of the rite gives us some idea of the significance of the event for the couple at the centre of the process. Through marriage, the liturgy states, the couple was bound in an 'indissoluble bond' and the husband and wife were united in 'peace and oneness of mind', embarking on the next stage of their life as a new social unit.[2] This involved a distancing from the natal family unit, a process recognised in the marriage service: "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother."[3] The development was marked and aided by social customs as well as by the religious ceremony. Throughout the early modern period, women all over the Balkans brought a dowry with them when they wed, the main purpose of which was to aid the creation of a new family and the production of children.[4] In the Cycladic Islands, the wife's dowry often included a dwelling for the couple, and more than half of the extant marriage settlements from Chios included a house for the wife, although this was often a gift from the bridegroom's family.[5] On Naxos the husband also usually came into his patrimony at marriage, enabling him to

[2] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 311; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 292.

[3] Goar, *Euchologion*, pp. 315–16; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 296.

[4] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 79: this purpose of the dowry was stipulated in the marriage contracts. See also p. 74 for the gift of a house on marriage.

[5] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 309; I.T. Visvizes, 'Αἱ μεταξὺ τῶν συζύγων περιουσιακαὶ σχέσεις εἰς τὴν Χίον κατὰ τὴν Τουρκοκρατίαν', *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Ἀρχείου τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου* 1 (1948), 16.

become financially independent from his parents.[6] For the couple, marriage formed part of the process of separation from their parents and a move towards the independence that adulthood demanded, a factor that was particularly important for the husband.[7] For the early modern as for the Byzantine Orthodox, marriage marked the transition to adulthood, emphasised in some areas by the formation of a separate household by the newly-wed couple.[8]

For women, marriage was an even clearer indicator of the transition to adulthood. They assumed adult status when they began conjugal relations and thus the social and biological statuses of women were closely bound together.[9] This transformation of female sexuality was expressed during a popular ritual that followed the marriage ceremony in some areas. The bride was required to walk over a sieve placed in the doorway. If the sieve did not break, her virtue was deemed to have been sullied for the cracking of the sieve as she passed over the marital threshold symbolised her loss of virginity at marriage.[10] The social and biological processes were so closely identified that if one did not occur with the other — and the sieve did not break — the bride could be repudiated. In some places this rite had its corollary in an ecclesiastical practice. The traveller Thevenot reports that on Rhodes at the end of the wedding ceremony the priest broke a glass after drinking from it saying, "so the bridegroom breaks the virginity of the bride."[11] The social and sexual transformation of women had to take place simultaneously. Social sanctions also reinforced the relationship between the two: in Naxos dowries were promised on the condition that the daughter did not 'suffer misfortune', that is, lose her virginity before marriage.[12]

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[6] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 74.

[7] Evelyne Patlagean, 'L'Entrée dans l'âge adulte à Byzance aux XIII^{e}–XIV^{e} siècles', *Historicité de l'enfance et de la jeunesse* (Athens, 1986), p. 268.

[8] Alexander P. Kazhdan, *People and Power in Byzantium: an Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, D.C., 1982), p. 63. In Byzantium, it marked the end of youth. See Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 231; 252 which emphasise the relationship between adulthood, receiving the patrimony, and marriage on Naxos: wills leaving property to children noted that they would come into it "when they reached the legal age to get married."

[9] Patlagean, 'l'âge adulte', p. 267.

[10] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 196.

[11] Jean Thevenot, *The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant*, trans. A. Lovell (London, 1687), p. 83.

[12] Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 275–76.

Although marriage required separation from the natal family, it also involved the formation of new ties. Through matrimony two families were brought together. Thus the importance of the union extended beyond the two individuals immediately concerned and the wider family had a vested interest. Marriage was not a matter of individual choice, but of family alliance, for it was the continuation of the family that was at stake.[13] Some even left instructions for their daughters' marriage in their wills.[14] Ecclesiastical law upheld the right of parents to choose partners for their children.[15] Therefore the spouse was usually selected by the parents, despite any attachment their offspring might have to someone else. A girl might fall in love with a young man from her village, but this did not prevent her parents marrying her to another from the motive of profit.[16] In marrying their daughter or son parents were making an investment in the future of their family line. Rich families would choose the wealthiest or most able individual for their daughter. In Constantinople, the traveller Sandys records that the best sponge diver was chosen as a husband by the parents of the most beautiful and best dowered girl.[17] Similarly on Nikaria it was impossible for the man to marry unless he was a good diver, for otherwise he would be unable to support his new family.[18]

These alliances were important precisely because of the new relationship that marriage created between the two families. While the married couple formed a separate family unit, at the same time the natal families of the couple had to expand to include new members; not just a new daughter- or son-in-law but the rest of the affinial family as well. This new situation is reflected in the prohibitions on

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[13] Ibid., pp. 234–36.

[14] For a mid-eighteenth-century example see N.M. Vaporis, 'A Study of the Ziskind Ms: No. 22 of the Yale University Library', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 14 (1969). Supplement, 103–104.

[15] See the proscriptions given in the seventeenth-century *Nomokriterion* contained in Demetrios S. Ginis, *Περίγραμμα Ἱστορίας τοῦ Μεταβυζαντινοῦ δικαίου* (Athens, 1966), no. 100, esp. pp. 75–76.

[16] Xavier Scrofani, *Voyage en Grèce de Xavier Scrofani, Sicilien, fait en 1794 et 1795*, trans. J.F.C. Blanvillain (Paris, 1801), vol. 1, p. 35.

[17] George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun Anno Domini 1610: Foure Bookes. Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy, and Ilands Adioyning* (London, 1615; facsimile reprint, Amsterdam, 1973), pp. 17–18.

[18] Thevenot, *Travels*, pt. 1, p. 111.

incest which also referred to relationships established through marriage: in-laws were included along with blood relatives within the prohibited degrees. In the penitential of John the Faster there were penances laid down for those who committed incest with the bride of a son, or the wife of a brother or mother-in-law or sister of a mother-in-law.[19] The *Nomokanon* of Cotelerius dealt with the situation in more detail and provided penances for infringements of the prohibited degrees, for example, if two sisters married one man (six years penance), or if the father and son had relations with the same woman (eight years), or if the son-in-law had relations with his mother-in-law (nine years).[20] Thus through the union of the couple, the two families were brought into a relationship, the status of which was legally equivalent to blood ties.[21]

The birth of children was closely associated with matrimony, and this event was and is anticipated in the Orthodox wedding service. One prayer asks God to make the couple "glad with the sight of sons and daughters".[22] Another refers to biblical accounts where couples had been miraculously blessed with children, reminding Christ that he blessed the institution of marriage at Cana so that he might "make manifest that it is thy will that there should be lawful marriage" and following on from this 'the begetting of children'.[23] Indeed, the church looked upon procreation as the purpose of marriage: a monk from Mount Athos wrote in the seventeenth century that sex for any other reason was a terrible crime.[24] Not all were so strict, but contraception was frowned upon and stigmatised by its close association with the use of magic substances such as the head of a frog or the fat of a lion.[25]

There was also a social focus on the production of children. It was through children that the family line, paternal and maternal, continued. In fact, they were considered so vital to the marriage that the union of the families and the individual transition from the single to the married state was not deemed complete until the birth of

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[19] Pseudo John the Faster, *Ordo*, col. 1893.
[20] See Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cclxxiv, p. 98.
[21] For an example where marriage was challenged on these grounds see Vaporis, Supplement, 97.
[22] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 313; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 294.
[23] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 316; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 295.
[24] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 66.
[25] Politis, 'κεφάλαιον', 386.

the first child. Kasdagli writes in her study of dowries in seventeenth-century Naxos that:

> abundant evidence from the last thirty years of the seventeenth century shows that man and wife remained alien to the other's lineage throughout; the two united only in the new vertical line they themselves would create. If they produced no children, the property would be used by the collateral kin, perpetuating their separate vertical lines.[26]

The economic interests were not irrevocably joined until the first child was born. If the wife died childless, the dowry was inherited by her own family.[27] Kasdagli argues that the rights of the natal family rather than that of the new family unit were strengthened during the seventeenth century in the Cyclades.[28] The general restatement by the church of the Byzantine custom of *trimoria*, where the father retained a third of the property if the mother predeceased their only child perhaps occurred in response to this development.[29] This law, however, did not cover cases where there were no children and presumably the dowry continued to return from whence it came. Thus the transformation enacted by marriage was only completed with the birth of the first child.[30]

Marriage and birth were necessary not only for the continuation of the family but also for the whole community. Again, this is expressed in the betrothal service: God is asked "that there may be granted unto them children for the continuation of their race".[31] In 1701 Patriarch Kallinikos II expressed his fear that rising dowries would make it more difficult to marry and consequently would have a dire effect on the whole Orthodox community.[32] Without marriage,

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[26] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 77.

[27] N.M. Vaporis, 'A Study of the Ziskind Ms: No. 22 of the Yale University Library', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 13 (1968), 76–77; see also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174 and van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 48.

[28] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 270. In Chios, however, the system was different. See I.T. Vizvises, 'Δικαστικαὶ ἀποφάσεις τοῦ 17ου αἰῶνος ἐκ τῆς νήσου Μυκόνου', *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Ἀρχείου τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου* 7 (1957), 47; no. 26, 103–106. The Chian judge awarded the plaintiff a portion of his wife's property for use in his lifetime. He did not award ownership. Visvizes suggests that he had compromised between the Chian system, which awarded ownership, and the system on Mykonos which emphasised the rights of the natal family.

[29] Ginis, *Περίγραμμα*, n. 266, pp. 160–62; Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 270.

[30] On which, see chapter 5, pp. 123–27.

[31] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 310; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 291.

[32] Kallinikos II (1688 Mar–1688 Nov; 1689–1693; 1694–1702). Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 158–59.

a new generation of Orthodox children would not be produced. Marriage and the production of children were vital to the continuation of Orthodoxy.

Popular Beliefs and Practices Surrounding Marriage

Marriage was the focus of great expectation, particularly for women.[33] Consequently, it was accompanied by a wealth of popular customs, such as the divining rituals girls carried out to discover who they would marry, rites to prevent curses at the wedding itself, and customs and practices to ensure a happy union and healthy and wealthy offspring. Across the Balkans, girls tried to predict their fate at marriage. In some places those who wished to find out about their future husband had to eat a special pie and then place a red, a white, and a yellow flower under their pillow. The next morning they pulled out one of the three. If they caught hold of the white one, they would marry a young man, if it was the red, a man of middle age and if the yellow, a widower.[34] The fate of remaining unmarried was not considered.

However, like the period surrounding baptism, which marked the transition of the woman to motherhood and the child to a differentiated human individual, the period surrounding the wedding was a dangerous one. The ceremony itself was very public and care had to be taken to protect the couple from those who wished them evil. During the service the couple were in danger from the curses of jealous suitors who aimed to prevent either consummation of the union or birth of children. At the point in the ceremony when the husband had to consent to take the woman as his wife, an enemy could make three knots in a cord while speaking certain words: "I tie N and N and the devil in the middle". These three knots should then be thrown into the sea or a fire to make the husband completely impotent. This curse could be averted if the husband pressed the foot of his wife while saying 'Yes' to his vows.[35] Knives, particu-

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[33] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 241.

[34] F.C.H.L. Pouqueville, *Travels in Greece and Turkey*, trans. Anne Plumptre (London, 1820), p. 129; Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, p. 194; Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 120–21.

[35] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 136; for variations of this curse see T.S. Hughes, *Travels in Greece and Albania* (London, 1830), vol. 1, pp. 184–85; John C. Hobhouse

larly black-handled ones, were often stuck in the door to prevent the curses taking effect.[36] If the curse did take hold, it could be lifted by placing a pistol, which had been used to commit murder, under the bed and this allowed consummation to take place immediately. By preventing consummation and childbirth, such curses acted to impede the full transition to adulthood of the married pair. Measures were taken not only to protect the couple from these attacks, but also to ensure their good fortune. Cottonseed was scattered on the married couple to ensure their felicity and there were many rituals for winning the love of the husband or wife or for aiding conception.[37] Both husbands and wives, who had taken partners who were not of their own choosing, were anxious to obtain the affections of their spouse.

Gelloudes, Nereides *and the Female Nature*

The number of these practices and the frequency with which travellers recorded them highlights their absence from Allatios' text. Anthropological studies of modern Greece have also reinforced the picture presented by the travellers and stressed that most demonic attacks occur during the period immediately prior to marriage.[38] In contrast, in the *De opinationibus*, there is no mention of any of the rites or practices surrounding marriage, nor of the period being particularly dangerous to the protagonists. It is peculiar that Allatios does not touch on the subject of marriage at all, given the richness of popular practice in this area and his remit to discuss the beliefs of the Greeks in his own time. The omission is even more significant

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(Baron Broughton), *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey, in Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the Years 1809 and 1810* (London, 1813), vol. 2, p. 528; André Grasset de Saint-Saveur, *Voyage historique, littéraire et pittoresque dans les isles et possessions ci-devant Venétiennes du Levant* (Paris, [1799/1800]), vol. 2, p. 47; J.L.S. Bartholdy, *Observations sur le voyage en Grèce, fait dans les années 1803–1804*, trans. Augustin du Coudray, 2 vols. (Paris, 1807), pp. 60–61. A variation occurs in Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 312 where the mother of the bride employs the curse to prevent the husband straying from the marriage bed.

[36] On this point and the power of the black-handled knife of the sorcerer see Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 195; 255–56. For marriage customs involving knives see Tertius T.C. Kendrick, *The Ionian Islands: Manners and Customs; Sketches of Ancient History with Anecdotes of the Supernatural* (London, 1822), p. 18.

[37] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 132; Grasset, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 48.

[38] Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 174–75.

when it is realised that several of his excerpts are intimately connected to ideas surrounding marriage.

Allatios discusses both *gelloudes*, or child-stealing demons, and *nereides* — the beautiful nymphs more familiar to us in their ancient Greek context. Although the *gello's* attacks are concentrated around the time of childbirth, the birth of the first child was an integral part of marriage. The threat was most often directed towards the child, but the *gello* was also reputed to dry up the mother's milk.[39] Moreover, the child and mother were also closely connected and what the *gello* wanted from the child was the blood of the mother, deemed in the biology of the time to be the source of fertility.[40] By attacking the child, the *gello* was trying to obtain the very substance upon which the ability to bear children depended.[41] Like the curses pronounced during the marriage ceremony, the *gello's* actions impeded the progression of the couple into adulthood and, in particular, the vital transition of the woman to motherhood.

Allatios also failed to connect the *nereides* to marriage. In modern Greece, the period surrounding the nuptial rites is the highpoint of their activity.[42] Unfortunately, there is little evidence on their behaviour either during the Byzantine period or the Tourkokratia but, as Greenfield points out, "it would seem reasonable to suggest that the literature here may not accurately reflect the state of popular belief."[43] Therefore, before investigating in detail the relationship of the *gello* and *nereides* to marriage, it is worth discussing Allatios' account because it offers a rare insight into popular perceptions of the *nereides*. According to Allatios, the *nereides* were beautiful women who lived in the countryside. They had a predilection for wooded and watery places and they could often be seen there dancing in shady glades, particularly

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[39] See Greenfield, *Gylou*, 110; 112 for the texts which attribute this activity to her.

[40] See chapter 5 pp. 124; 129 above.

[41] Sorlin, 'Striges', 435–36.

[42] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174.

[43] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 190. There is a fifteenth-century account of the *nereides* by Joannes Magister Canabutius in manuscript form held in the Vienna Library: Περὶ Νυμφῶν, τίνες εἰσί, καὶ πόσα γένη τούτων εἰσί, καὶ ὅτι γένη δαιμόνων εἰσίν, ἃ καλοῦσι βαρβαρίζοντες Νεραγίδας, quae vulgo vocantur Νεραΐδες. Cited in Daniel de Nessel, *Catalogus, sive Recensio specialis omnium codicum manuscriptorum Graecorum, nec non linguarum orientalium, augustissimae Bibliothecae Caesareae Vindobonensis* (Vienna, 1690), pt. v, p. 168. I have been unable to see this work.

at midday. Characteristic of *nereides* was their desire for young men and their love of children:

> They lust for young men, but especially the most beautiful, and they rejoice in infants of both sexes. When they are able, they seize many of the more beautiful [infants] and give them back enriched with precious things, but keep others with them and cherish them.[44]

Allatios also includes in this general description a story from Chios that concerns a child who had been abducted by these *exotika*. While on holiday, a little girl became separated from her family and went running to a nearby well. She was lifted up by a strange force and found herself drawn down into the well, where she was set down safely on the water. Her parents noticed that she was missing and went to rescue her. Her father too was transported into the well but managed to climb out with his daughter when a neighbour brought a ladder. The family understood the event in the following terms:

> They attributed the seizure of the girl and her father to the *nereides*, pretending they had their dwelling in that well. The girl herself also said that while she was standing by the well she had seen women playing on the water with the greatest delight and, when invited by them, she had thrown herself into the well voluntarily.[45]

In this case both the child and her father were unharmed, but the *nereides* could also be hostile:

> Often also at midday, a handsome young man, or pretty little boy, deviates from the path for the sake of relaxation while thinking about other things, and immediately falls to the ground. He is <then> bent by a contraction of the nerves or his face is twisted, or one foot goes lame if not both, or he becomes like a hunchback, or is afflicted by another injury to the body.[46]

Allatios' discussion therefore shows two sides to the *nereides*. On the one hand, they enriched their lovers but stole children without harming them. On the other, they could be extremely dangerous, attacking those who crossed their path.[47] Thus the *nereides* of popular belief

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[44] Allatios, *De opin.* XIX, p. 158.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Compare Allatios' description of the *nereides* of the seventeenth century with that of Charles Stewart in his discussion of beliefs of modern Greece: 'Nymphomania', pp. 219–50.

were neither wholly evil nor wholly good and this ambiguity was and is a wider characteristic of popular beliefs.[48]

The behaviour of the *nereides* and the *gello*, stealing children and seducing young men, obviously did not correspond to that expected from women in Greek society. During the Tourkokratia girls did not have the freedom to behave in this way. Indeed, in some areas it would have been difficult for girls to meet anyone outside their family. Travellers often remarked on the seclusion of Greek women, who were prevented from forming romantic attachments. During his journey through the Ottoman Empire, the French traveller Pierre Belon recorded that Greek women did not leave the house except to wash or to pray for the dead at cemeteries.[49] A fellow traveller, André Guillet, even writes that those in Athens who were rich had a private church so that wives and daughters were not seen in public except during great festivals.[50] Some girls were betrothed without being informed by their parents, and did not see their intended until their wedding day.[51] Not all women were so closely guarded, however, and such general accounts disguise the involvement of married women and widows in wider economic dealings. Many would have worked in the fields and family businesses while their husbands were away.[52]

Nevertheless the seclusion of women was encouraged by the underlying conception of the female nature. Ingrained within Byzantine and post-Byzantine beliefs was a view that the nature of womankind was closely tied to that of Eve. In the Garden of Eden it was Eve who took the apple from the snake, because her nature as a woman meant that she was gullible and weak willed. She was also a source

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[48] Ibid., p. 225; Stewart, *Demons*, p. 153.

[49] Pierre Belon, *Les Observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses mémorables: trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Iudée, Égypte, Arabie, & autres pays estranges, rédigées en trois livres* (Paris, 1588), p. 13.

[50] André Georges Guillet, *An Account of a Late Voyage to Athens* (London, 1676), p. 143.

[51] Guillaume Joseph Grelot, *A Late Voyage to Constantinople; Containing an Exact Description of the Propontis and the Hellespont . . . as also of the City of Constantinople . . . Likewise an Account of the Ancient and the Present State of the Greek Church*, trans. J. Philips (London, 1683), pp. 164–65.

[52] Kasdagli, 'Gender', pp. 67–69; For an example of female economic activity in fourteenth-century Crete see Sally McKee, 'Women under Venetian Colonial Rule in the Early Renaissance: Observations on their Economic Activities', *Renaissance Quarterly* 51:1 (1998), 42–67. For examples of some early modern money lending by widows see Vaporis, 'Ziskind', 79–80.

of temptation, for she then persuaded Adam to take the apple too. Women were believed to have inherited this characteristic and to lead men astray, particularly in sexual matters. This was a frequent theme in the poetry of the early modern period.[53] The woman herself, and the society which surrounded her, needed to be protected from the potential chaos her nature could cause. For this reason she was usually placed under the authority of a male family member who would restrain the wildness of her nature. In marriage a woman was restrained and protected by her husband. The subordination of the woman to the man was emphasised in the wedding service, where prayers asked God to "grant that this thy handmaid may, in all things, be subject unto her husband; and that this thy servant may be the head of his wife, that they may live according to thy will", and following Paul's injunction instructed 'wives submit to your husbands'.[54] In this passage, matrimony was compared to the union of the head and the body. The husband was perceived as the head, exercising his rationality over the passions associated with the carnal nature of the (female) body.

Nereides therefore represent the converse of women in society and reveal the consequences of unfettered female sexuality. Where young women were closely secluded, the *nereides* were free to seduce young men at will, steal other women's husbands and generally cause chaos in the social order.[55] The *gello* shares many traits with the *nereides*. Like them, she appears outwith this familial framework and acts independently according to her own desires. In pictures her hair is shown as wild and unbound, indicating the uncontrolled nature of her sexuality, and her ability to cause chaos within society (see fig. 3).[56] In the story which precedes the exorcism of the *gello*, at first her female nature is free to act, unrestricted by the benign influence of male authority, until her actions are curbed by the saintly brothers; or in an alternative version, the Archangel Michael.[57]

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[53] S. Alexiou (ed.), *Κρητικὴ Ανθολογία* (Herakleion, 1969), pp. 44–45; 48–54; 62–64.

[54] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 316 but he omits the readings which follow the crowning; trans. in Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 296–97; Ephesians 5: 22.

[55] Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 175–76.

[56] Thomas Provatakis, '*Ο Διάβολος εἰς τὴν Βυζαντινὴν Τέχνην* (Thessaloniki, 1980), pp. 114 ff., pl. 110.

[57] For a full reference to the extant versions see Greenfield, *Gylou*, 103–121.

Fig. 3. St Michael and the *gello*

More than the *nereides,* the *gello* is clearly an evil, demonic figure. She attacks innocent victims: Melitene in the Sisinnios redactions, and the Virgin Mary and Christ in those featuring the Archangel:

> As the archangel Michael came down from heaven the unclean *gello* met him and he said to her, "Where have you come from?" She said, "I go into the creatures of God, as a snake, as a dragon, as a four legged reptile, to strike against men and women to make their hearts ache, to crush their brains, to grind their teeth, and to abduct their infants — my tenth name is *Pataxarea.*[58] And when the Holy Maria gave

[58] 'she who strikes'.

> birth to the word of truth, I turned aside, departing to deceive her." And she found herself deceived and laying hold of her <the *gello*> by the right lock of hair of her head, <the archangel> tortured her. She said to the archangel, "Release me St Michael of God. Do not torture me and I will tell you my twelve names. Where they are proclaimed, there I will not ever enter."[59]

The *gello* is presented as opposed to God and all those who represent him: the bearers of 'the mysteries of God', the saints Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, and the Archangel Michael.[60] The association between the *gello* and the devil is clear. She attacks the 'creatures of God' in the guise of animals such as serpents, which had a close relationship with the devil. She is also described as a deceiver, an adjective often used in relation to the devil, who has seduced humans away from the true worship of God since the Fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden. Most important of all, she also moves to attack Mary and Christ himself and thus threatens the salvation of humankind, acting to maintain the division between God and humanity which originated with the Fall of Adam. The tale therefore partakes in the cosmic struggle between good and evil, God and the devil.

In contrast to the *gello*, Melitene is represented as a good woman, redeeming her female nature through childbirth. Like all good women, she is depicted within a family context.[61] It is true that in the two versions of the *gello* exorcism quoted by Allatios there is no mention of Melitene's husband, but he does appear in other manuscripts.[62] However, even in these he plays no essential role in the proceedings and thus in the manner of oral literature and folk tales, can be omitted without damage being done to the essence of the tale, which is the stealing of the child and the eliciting of names from the *gello*. The lack of role for the husband can be explained by the fact that the events surrounding the birth are marked off as the preserve of women alone.[63] Nevertheless, Melitene still appears within a family unit, for it is her brothers, Sisinnios and Sisynodoros who pursue the *gello* and restore the child to her. She is characterised by her

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[59] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 422.

[60] For the version of the tale featuring the saints Sisinnios and Sisynodoros see chapter 4 above, pp. 87–88, 97–98, 102.

[61] Catia S. Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9 (1984), 78–79.

[62] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 422.

[63] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 89–90; Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 282.

relationship with them and also, crucially, by her relationship with her child and the status of motherhood. Finally, the two variations of the exorcism draw a parallel between the two mothers, Melitene and the Virgin Mary, in their sufferings at the hands of the *gello*. Through marriage and childbirth, Melitene and all women can imitate the ideal set by the Virgin Mary.

In spite of the dangers they pose, *nereides* and *gelloudes* underline the focus on marriage and childbirth which was the goal of women in Greek society. Their actions are directed towards obtaining husbands and children. The *nereides* seduce men and steal children and the *gello* acts to obtain the fertile blood which is necessary for childbirth. With these *exotika*, who represent the converse of women in society, the 'good' desire for children becomes socially destructive, particularly in the case of the *gello*, who terrorises families until she is 'bound' through the authority of the exorcism provided by the (male) saints.

The Gello *and the Destructive Force of Envy*

Allatios failed to see the connection between *gelloudes*, *nereides* and a whole range of popular practices surrounding marriage and childbirth because he ignored the social context in which the beliefs occured. Frustrated in their own desire for a husband and children, the *gello* and *nereides* acted to prevent other women from achieving these goals. By seducing men, attacking women in childbirth, and stealing babies, they attempted to impede the transition which marriage initiated. The *gello* in particular was associated with the destructive force of envy. This is implicit in the story of her origin: it was said that she was a young woman who died childless, and 'loving children too much' haunted woman and those dying young.[64] She had failed to fulfil her role in life and continued to pursue it even after death.

The association of the *gello* with the evil eye was well established in the Byzantine tradition. A number of seals from the early period have been found, bearing references to the evil eye, to the struggle

[64] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 116.

against demons in general and to the *gello* in particular.[65] On one side the seals show an eye, pierced by two spears and a triangular bladed knife, below which various animals are depicted. On the other, there is a picture of a horseman spearing a female demon beneath his mount. The word 'φθόνος' (*phthonos*) or 'envy' appears above the eye. On some amulets the horseman is identified with Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, the saints who battled against the *gello*.[66] Most, however, name the figure as the biblical king Solomon by the phrase "Flee loathsome demoness. Solomon pursues thee."[67] The similarity of the Solomon and Sisinnios amulets suggests that the Solomon amulets were also apotropaic instruments directed against the *gello*. Solomon was reputed to be the author of the great book of demonology, *The Testament of Solomon*, which lists amongst other demons one *Obyzouth*, a female demon with dishevelled hair, who told Solomon: "I do not rest at night, but travel around all the world visiting women and, divining the hour <when they give birth>, I search <for them> and strangle their new-born infants". When challenged by Solomon she revealed that she could be thwarted "by the angel Raphael; and when women give birth, write my name on a piece of papyrus and I shall flee from them to the other world."[68] The two demons *gello* and *Obyzouth* were identified during the Byzantine period by Michael Psellos.[69] More recently, Greenfield's analysis of the *gello's* names has suggested that *Obyzouth* is a form of *Abyzou*, one of the most frequently cited epithets in the list of *gello* names.[70] Both the Sisinnios and the Solomon amulets were therefore directed against the child-stealing demon, who was associated with the evil eye.

The evil eye and the *gello* were also linked in the early modern period. Allatios' contemporaries believed that *gelloudes* and *striges* "give

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[65] See J. Russell, 'The Archaeological Context of Magic in the Early Byzantine Period' in Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, pp. 39–42; Paul Perdrizet, 'Σφραγὶς Σολομῶνος', *Revue des Études Grecques* 16 (1903), 42–61; Gustave Schlumberger, 'Amulettes byzantins anciens destinés à combattre les maléfices et maladies', *Revue des Études Grecques* 5 (1892), 74–75.

[66] Perdrizet, 'Σφραγὶς Σολομῶνος', 48.

[67] Russell, 'Archaeological Context', p. 39.

[68] See the Greek text of McCown, *Testament*, 13:3 p. 43 and his notes on that page which indicate that ἀβυζούθ, βυζοῦθ and ἰδοὺθ and possibly ἀβυζοῦ also appeared as names for the demon in alternative versions. For the translation see Duling, 'Testament', p. 974.

[69] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

[70] Greenfield, '*Gylou*', 125 states that the name appears in fifteen out of the twenty-one lists he consulted.

the evil eye and cause much harm", especially to children.[71] Like the *gello*, jealousy and the evil eye were frequently put forward as the cause of illness and death among young children. Fear of the damage that envy could do to the child was particularly great close to the time of birth. The danger posed by the evil eye was recognised both in ecclesiastical and popular rites: the prayer for the mother on the day of the birth asks the Lord to protect her "from infirmity and weakness, from jealousy and envy, and from the evil eye".[72] Talismans were often carried and these were also hung around the necks of animals and placed in houses to ward off evil.[73] It was especially important for children to wear them because of their vulnerability to the evil eye for they could be placed in great peril by indiscreet words and looks. Some women believed that looks alone could harm the infant and cause almost all the illnesses of young children.[74] Praise could also be dangerous. A Catholic priest in Athens took a baby from its mother and told her it was the prettiest child in town. Instead of being flattered, she spat in the infant's face, telling the priest that he had said enough to kill it.[75] His praise intensified the envy directed towards the child, and so increased the peril it was in. The threat could be warded off using garlic and salt, and once a baby was old enough to move, cloves of garlic and stones with special powers were hung around its neck.[76]

There are similarities in the way the evil eye and the *gello* brought about the death of children. Traditionally the evil eye caused death by wasting but this was also a characteristic symptom of a *gello*

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[71] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 115. The link between the *gello* and envy also continued into modern times. One nineteenth- or early twentieth-century version of the exorcism text even includes '*Baskania*', which was also used to denote the evil eye, as one of the names of the *gello*; Greenfield, *Gylou*, 132; 90.

[72] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.

[73] John Covel, *Extracts from the Diaries of John Covel, 1670–1679* in James T. Bent (ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (London, 1893), p. 255; Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 102.

[74] Grasset, *Voyage*, p. 48.

[75] John Galt, *Letters from the Levant: Containing Views of the State of Society, Manners, Opinions and Commerce, in Greece, and Several of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago* (London, 1813), p. 172; Pouqueville, *Travels in Greece*, p. 129.

[76] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 178; Pouqueville, *Travels in Greece*, p. 130; Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa* (Cambridge, 1810), vol. 2, p. 173; vol. 4, p. 170; Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece or an Account of a Trip made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1817), vol. 2, p. 155.

attack.[77] In the eleventh century "midwives call the new-born children who waste away '*Gillibrota*', that is, devoured by the *gillo*".[78] During the early modern period we are told that a baby who came into contact with the fearsome demoness but escaped abduction:

> will later suffer harm from that contact [with the *gello*], since he will finally die, wailing and refusing food — never being quiet — because of a headache or some damage to the intestines.[79]

Contact with the *gello* causes internal damage to the child, which prevents it from eating and slowly brings about its death. The beliefs surrounding the evil eye and their concentration around the time of birth emphasise the heightened emotion surrounding this time and the overwhelming fear of jealousy which attended it. The *gello* shares many features with the evil eye, and in some instances is explicitly connected with it. Therefore in order to understand the social context of the *gello* it is essential to examine why childbirth was surrounded by such conflicting emotions.

The Gello, *Envy and Marital Status*

It is especially significant that not only demons but also particular kinds of individuals were identified as *gelloudes*. Allatios and his sources characterised the *gello* in two different ways. On the one hand Allatios' Greek contemporaries attributed the deeds of the *gello* to old crones, poor, disillusioned and miserable.[80] In Psellos' time too, it was 'those tired by age' who were cast in the demonic role.[81] On the other hand, in the tale recounted by Sappho and *Suidas*, the perpetrator of the crimes was a young woman. For Sappho and *Suidas* the *gello* was the spirit of a woman who had 'suffered an early death' and because of this had become a child-devouring ghost.[82]

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[77] John Chrysostom, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos: Homilia IV*, *PG* 62, cols 41–42; Dickie, 'Evil Eye', p. 33.

[78] O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164, lines 1–20.

[79] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 116.

[80] Ibid., p. 115.

[81] Ibid., III, p. 118. This was also the case in the writings of John of Damascus and the ninth-century Ignatios the Deacon. John of Damascus, *De strygibus*, col. 1604; Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172. See also Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117.

[82] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117; Sappho, *fragmenta*, no. 178 p. 101; Zenobius, *Corpus Paroemiographorum*, vol. 1, Centuria III.3 p. 58; *Suidas*, vol. 1, p. 512, no. 112.

Some Byzantine authors seem to be puzzled by the discrepancy in the tradition. How did the activities of a ghost of a young woman become identified with the behaviour of older women in society? Ignatios tries to account for it by explaining how a tale had been projected on to certain members of society: those who had been deceived by the devil into believing the ancient tale now accused older, vulnerable members of society of killing children in the guise of spirits.[83] This explanation was accepted by both Allatios and Psellos, but it fails to explain why, when placed in a social context, a tale that is specifically concerned with the death of a girl before marriage and childbirth is used to victimise the aged.

It is significant that both the young woman and the old crone were marked out by their inability to bear children. *Suidas* and Sappho relate explicitly that the *gello* was a young woman who died as a virgin whereas Psellos, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, and Allatios state that those accused of her deeds were old, and therefore beyond childbearing age. In the first case, the woman was clearly unmarried. In the second, the stress on the advanced age of the women and their vulnerability to accusation might suggest that they were widows without a family to protect them. The identification of the *gello* with virgins and widows, or at least post-menopausal women, was closely linked to the ideal of marriage and the effect it had on women's lives. Although matrimony was recognised as an important stage in life for both men and women, it was the woman's life that was more deeply affected by this change. Marriage and childbirth had a fundamental effect on her status, and the transition from single woman to wife was viewed in a positive light. Wives were distinguished from unmarried girls and there were differences in their ability to act in the world. These differences, however, are difficult to discern clearly from the evidence available and the conditions under which women lived varied from place to place. It is likely that married women had more freedom than when they were children. We are often told that before they were married, girls did not leave the house except for weddings or funerals.[84] Yet these occasions could also be dangerous because they presented an opportunity for the

[83] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 117; Ignatios the Deacon, *Tarasios*, p. 172.
[84] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 35.

women to be seen in public. One report suggests that young, unmarried girls were even barred from wedding celebrations.[85]

Through marriage a woman was marked out and identified with a different social group from before, a group which had particular duties and obligations in society. It is clear that this change was considered socially significant because of the public demarcation of these groups by dress. Women's dress varied from area to area, but, within a single village it also varied according to socio-economic and marital status. Unmarried women, brides, the newly married, older married women, and widows were all recognisable through their dress.[86] Once married, a woman was marked off from the unmarried by her dress, particularly her hairstyle or headgear. On Chios the style of dress distinguished marital status more clearly than it did social position. While only the quality of material used varied with the social status of the women, the style and colour marked out married from unmarried.[87] Nicolas de Nicolay's illustrations clearly show the differences in dress. Married women of Nicolay's time wore a conical head-dress, either white or coloured, which was bound to the head with strings and ribbons tied at the back. A band of yellow gauze encircled the forehead and was also tied at the back of the head. Unmarried women wore less elaborate head-dresses decorated with flowers and allowed the ends of the forehead band to fall to the waist. Married women's dress was also distinguished by the number of skirts they wore, the fine white shawl draped over their shoulders, and in particular by the *poungia* or purse hanging from the waist (unfortunately not shown in the plate).[88] These purses were exclusive to married women, and they formed part of the dowry.[89]

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[85] Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 82.

[86] Smithsonian Institute, *Greek Costumes and Embroideries from the Benaki Musem* (Athens, 1976), p. 7; see for example the costumes in Angeliki Hatzimichali, *The Greek Folk Costume*, trans. Philip Ramp (Athens, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 26 ff.; vol. 2. pp. 18–47. For a thorough discussion of dress in Chios see Philip P. Argenti, *The Costumes of Chios: their Development from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 1953), esp. chs. 8–10.

[87] Argenti, *Costumes*, pp. 167; 272; William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteene Yeares Travayles from Scotland to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrica* (Glasgow, 1632; facsimile reprint, Glasgow, 1906), pp. 92–93.

[88] Nicolas de Nicolay, *The Navigations into Turkie* (London, 1585; facsimile reprint Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 37–38.

[89] Argenti, *Costumes*, p. 155.

Fig. 4. Costume of a married woman of Chios (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

Nicolay's plates date to the sixteenth century but the Chian dress followed the same style until the late seventeenth when the headdress of the girls began to flatten and the sleeves became broader, but the features differentiating wives from maidens remained in place. Throughout the period widows were marked out from both married and unmarried women by their black dress and wide, heavy veil.[90]

[90] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 91 notes that the veil distinguished the con-

Fig. 5. Costume of an unmarried woman of Chios (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

These public distinctions in dress signified a deeper division in roles. In particular, childbirth was the preserve of women who were or had been married. Only they were allowed in the room while a woman was giving birth. Sonnini tells us that:

> The first concern of the midwife was to cause the locks of the doors, boxes, trunks, and, indeed, every thing that could lock in the house, to

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dition of the wearer. See also Jean Thevet, *Grand Insulaire*, vol. 2, fol. 166v., unpublished ms held in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, Mss français no. 15433; quoted in Argenti, *Costumes*, appendix B, no. 1, p. 259.

> be opened. This precaution of keeping every thing wide open, founded on a very whimsical analogy, is not, on any account, to be neglected, if it be wished that the delivery should experience no difficulties; and, through a consequence of this ridiculous prejudice, none but married women are suffered in it, virgins being absolutely banished.[91]

This passage emphasises the need for openness during the parturition. Married women and widows were deemed to be open, like the doors and the chests. Their presence was essential to aid the further 'opening' of the pregnant woman which took place during childbirth. The presence of the unmarried, like locked doors and chests, could hinder the birthing process. Renée Hirschon's discussion of female sexuality is extremely useful for understanding Sonnini's comments. In her work on modern Greece she argues that female sexuality can be approached in terms of the categories 'open' and 'closed':

> in the specific context of childbearing the notion is appropriate, since it is the woman's body which opens to allow for growth and finally to bring forth the infant. 'Opening' thus has a close association with creation and with new life.[92]

It is important to appreciate the significance of the paired concepts open and closed, bound and loosed in Greek thought. These were not only symbolic concepts; open/closed objects exerted a sympathetic magic on human beings, preventing or facilitating a process. This was as crucial when it came to burial as it was during labour. There must be no knots around the corpse or this binding could prevent the release of the soul from the body.[93] As we have seen, the cursing or binding of the bridegroom at the wedding ceremony, which involved the tying of knots, prevented him from fulfilling his conjugal duties on the wedding night. In the case of a woman in childbirth, while closed objects could hinder the birth, the presence of open objects in the room aided the 'opening' of the woman herself, which was necessary for childbirth.

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[91] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 80; Galt, *Letters*, p. 173 reports that for the Albanians, similarly, all doors and windows must be opened and all those present must have keys, signifying their openness.

[92] Renée Hirschon, 'Open Body/Closed Space: the Transformation of Female Sexuality' in Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Defining Females: the Nature of Women in Society* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 62–63.

[93] See below chapter 7 pp. 191–92, 196 and chapter 8, pp. 202, 230–31.

Married women were therefore associated with the process of childbirth which brought with it honour and status. They were identified as good, productive, and associated with life and its continuation. The focus upon marriage and childbirth as the central and redeeming experience of a woman's life meant that all women not participating in this state were regarded as unfulfilled. Kasdagli notes that on Naxos during the seventeenth century "the yearning for children is particularly evident among childless women".[94] Consequently, children were a focus of envy, particularly for women outwith childbearing age.

Post-menopausal women were not only threatening because they were envious. Their 'openness' was no longer viewed in a positive way. While this 'openness' was a positive attribute for married women, connected with their sexual activity within marriage and with childbirth, the openness of older women was problematic. Widows had experienced a man's bed and their sexual desire, awakened by marriage, was no longer restrained by a husband, or directed towards the production of children.[95] Their behaviour was believed to be dictated by their desires. Every time a widow left home people would say that she was eager to remarry, or pursuing a husband.[96] The perception of the sexuality of widows also contributed to their depiction as demonic figures. The dangers posed by the weakness of the female nature were magnified in their case.

Although young women were also unmarried, as virgins they were less prone to passion than the widow. Catia Galatariotou has investigated the way in which during the Byzantine period virgins were 'sexually unspecified'.[97] They were not fully identified with the destructive female nature. Virginity was regarded as the highest of Christian virtues, the virtue of saints fighting against the temptations of the flesh and ties to the world. The girl's virginity placed her firmly within the Christian realm and made it more difficult to associate her with demons such as the *gello*. This too reduced her threat. In practical terms, a young, unmarried woman was situated within a

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[94] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 245.

[95] Blastares, *Σύνταγμα Γ*.2; Viscuso, 'Purity', 405.

[96] Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 71; Peter Edmund Laurent, *Recollections of a Classical Tour through Various Parts of Greece, Turkey, and Italy made in the Years 1818–1819* (London, 1822), vol. 1, pp. 367–68.

[97] Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches', 83.

close network of family ties and usually closely chaperoned or secluded. Her position also had the practical benefit that her relatives were anxious to protect her from slander as her reputation was important to them. She was thus less threatening, conforming to the pattern of a good woman.

In contrast widows were no longer situated within a protective family structure. When a woman lost her husband she often lost her social standing and in some areas, once women grew old they faced the general contempt of society.[98] Widows often had to manage their own affairs and had fewer family ties to call on.[99] The Ziskind manuscript, which records the decisions of the patriarchs of Constantinople during this period, like Kasdagli's work on Naxos, reveals that widows involved themselves in financial transactions to a much greater extent than their married counterparts. They frequently acted on matters arising out of their husband's estate — settling debts or acting in the interest of their children while they were minors. On occasions they also acted in their own interest, for example selling a house, or lending money.[100] Despite this greater freedom, or maybe because of it, people were highly suspicious of widows in society. In a culture which was suspicious of single women and acted to limit their power, widows stood at a disadvantage.

During the early modern period, married and single women were therefore sharply distinguished by society. Married women fulfilled what was seen as the most important female role and were therefore envied by the unmarried and widows. However, the social position of widows made them easier to accuse of being *gelloudes* than a young woman surrounded by her family. A widow was also more closely associated with the demonic because of her awakened but unfulfilled sexuality and so closer to the nature of the *gello*. Society was no longer protected from her desires by the presence of her husband. Young women were protected from such accusations by

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[98] Sandys, *Relation*, p. 80; see Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (London, 1992), pp. 50–53 where the loss of position within society forms part of the widow's funeral lament in modern Greece.

[99] For a contrast between the married women and widows in the way they interacted with the world see Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 81 where a wife states that her husband is master of her property; and p. 78, where Kasdagli argues that men often left wives in charge of their property in their wills. Vaporis, 'Ziskind', 83.

[100] Vaporis, Supplement, 90; 95; 96–97; 101; 106; Vaporis, 'Ziskind', 83.

their families, their virginity and because they retained the potential of reaching the high status position of wife and mother.

Despite the testimonies of Allatios, Psellos and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, which suggest that in the Christian period the *gello* was predominantly identified with old women, young women could still be cast in the role of child-stealing demons. Recent research has revealed that the overlapping of names and characteristics is a feature of popular beliefs.[101] Similar creatures are referred to by different names in different communities while characteristics of identically named creatures may vary over space and time. Although there is insufficient evidence to be certain of the situation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, folklorists and anthropologists of modern Greece have shown that in some places the activities of the *gello* are attributed to other *exotika*, such as the *nereides*, who are usually described as young women, or brides. The *nereides*, like the *gelloudes*, were known for their child-snatching activities, although in Allatios' accounts the former are more benign than the latter. In Zakynthos, however, it is the *nereides* who appear during the night and suck the blood of children.[102] Elsewhere this behaviour is attributed to ghosts, who once again take the form of young women.[103] Significantly, on Naxos the *gello* is often confused with both *lamies*, who appear as young and beautiful women, and *stringles*, who look old and ugly.[104] It is likely that such variations in the characteristics of the *exotika* were also a feature of the extremely localised culture of the early modern Aegean and this would suggest that the activities of the *gello* were associated with both young and old women during the Tourkokratia. Nevertheless, the young women in these accounts, like the ghost of Sappho, are not human but either ghosts or *exotika*. This should be contrasted with the identification of the *gello* with particular old women in society. It was only those young women who had not achieved their potential and died before having children who became threatening.[105]

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[101] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 163.

[102] Oikonomides ''Η γελλὼ', 247; Stewart, *Demons*, p. 162.

[103] Oikonomides, 'Traditions', 330.

[104] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 252. See Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1995), pp. 192–93 on the links between the demonological status of virgins and post-menopausal women in early modern western society.

[105] With this in mind, it would be interesting to investigate the burial of young

Witchcraft and Allatios' Understanding of the Gello

Allatios' lack of interest in marriage meant that he failed to place the *nereides* and the *gello* in their proper context, and did not see any connection between them. This omission arises partly from the fact that he saw each popular belief as separate and individually bounded and was not aware of their shifting nature and overlapping characteristics — nor the different names for the *exotika* which appeared in different places. Thus he was scornful of writers who lumped together *gello*, Lilith and other demonic creatures who shared some characteristics.[106] Again, this view is revealed in his discussion of the nightmare or *ephialtes* where he noted that Psellos had a different description to that provided by the lexicon *Suidas*. He remarked:

> I do not doubt that Psellos has confused the names, which in that author is not surprising since he was always seeking hidden matters and bringing new things to our attention. In these matters it is very easy for the memory to slip.[107]

According to Allatios, Psellos was not recording the variations in which these demons appeared, but had made a mistake. Allatios implied that the nature of each *exotiko* was closely connected to its name: each creature was a bounded, discrete individual and therefore variations rarely occurred in the use of names or characteristics of demons.[108] This approach allowed him to place the *nereides* and the *gello* in separate categories, and to understand them as completely different kinds of popular belief.

This was not always Allatios' approach, however. Occasionally he recognises some variation. In certain cases he draws together other different names and understands them as the same kind of creature. In the next chapters we will consider his discussion of the *vrykolakas* and *tympaniaios* and in the final chapter his classification of different kinds of demons as spirits of place. Even in the case of the *gello*,

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women in their wedding dresses, a custom which is occasionally described by the travellers and is also discussed by anthropologists, in terms of its symbolic fulfilment of marriage, and hence of its apotropaic qualities with respect to the *gello*. See Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 151–54 for a description of the funeral of the young wife of a priest. He does not record whether or not she had children.

[106] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 115.

[107] Ibid., X, p. 141.

[108] Ibid., XII, p. 142; XXIX, p. 176.

Allatios allows for a variety of names: people "call a witch 'στρίγλα', '*strigla*', the name having been readopted from the Latin, and by the more abstruse name of *gelu*, or *gello* or *gillo*."[109] Thus it was not merely his general approach to popular religion that caused him to overlook the association between *gelloudes* and *nereides*. Allatios' classification of popular beliefs here and elsewhere was governed by categories that arose out of his western background and intellectual approach: the *gello* he compared to the western witch and the *nereides* to spirits of place.[110] Allatios' categorisation of the *nereides* will be discussed in detail below but his association of the *gello* with western ideas of witchcraft draws in issues that are relevant to a discussion on the position of women in society and will be examined here.

For Allatios the similarity between the Greek and Latin name '*strigla*' indicated a deeper similarity between the essence of the beings that the name described because of the connection he posits between the name and the nature of a thing.[111] This allows him to describe the Greek belief in terms familiar to western witchcraft. The people:

> believe that certain old crones, marked out by their poverty and misery, call up an evil spirit since they are unable to achieve anything of value for the human race. After entering into a pact with the devil they contrive to the best of their ability those things which delight the devil himself.[112]

Allatios' description here conforms to the western understanding of the witch: a poor woman, often melancholic, who had formed a pact with the devil and then proceeded to carry out his commands. However, there are fundamental differences between East and West in the appearance of witchcraft and its treatment by the church which mean we should treat Allatios' identification of these two characters extremely carefully. Magical practices, that is the manipulation of the world through particular words and rituals, exist in most societies but the development of western witchcraft is widely acknowledged to have been anomalous, and arose out of a particular set of circumstances in the medieval west.[113]

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[109] Ibid., III, p. 116.

[110] Ibid., XIX–XX, pp. 162–63. On the *nereides* and Allatios' conception of spirits of place see below chapter 10 p. 298.

[111] Ibid., XII, p. 142; XXIX, p. 176.

[112] Ibid., II, p. 115.

[113] For the development of western witchcraft see Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-*

The diabolic pact which became so central in western witchcraft never became a prominent part of witchcraft in the East. There are examples of the pact with the devil, but they are not widespread, and in general are associated with the educated rather than the poverty-stricken old woman described by Allatios.[114] By mapping the *gello* on to the western figure of the witch, and associating her with the diabolic pact, Allatios attributes to her the factors characteristic of a western rather than eastern magical practitioner. The western witch was involved in a much wider range of diabolic activities than the *gello*. In particular she was believed to fly to Sabbaths on a broomstick, to have intercourse with the devil and bear the witches' mark. She could cause all kinds of illnesses to livestock and people but was especially linked to impotence. On the other hand, she was responsible for causing uncontrollable desire through love potions and cured people through white magic.

In contrast, the activity of the *gello* was restricted to assaults against women and children: "they cause men little or no bother" but can be harmful "to women, as to the simple-minded" and 'they attack infants'.[115] She did not partake in the wider variety of magical activities of the witch. Nevertheless, those accused of being *gelloudes* probably came from the same social group as those who administered medicine, and performed love magic and curses: old women.[116] In an excerpt that Allatios quoted from Pachymeres, when the emperor wanted to ensure the safe delivery of his daughter he took the advice of a wise old woman on how to ensure the safe delivery of his daughter. In this instance the advice was efficacious, although Pachymeres acknowledges that her recommendation was "over and above the customs of the common people".[117] More often, both during the Byzantine period and later, little old women were cast as the stereotypical foolish character involved in magical practice.

Hunt in Early Modern Europe (London, 1987), p. 9; Robert Rowland, '"Fantastical and Devilishe Persons": European Witch-Beliefs in Comparative Perspective' in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), p. 174.

[114] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 255; Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 132.

[115] Allatios, *De opin.* III, p. 115.

[116] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 137–38.

[117] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIII, pp. 169–70; Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, 3:32, pp. 276–77.

At a deeper level, Allatios' understanding of the *gello* in terms of witchcraft highlights similarities regarding beliefs about the nature of women in the two cultures. Eastern and western Christianity stressed the link between the female nature and the diabolic. In both cases women were believed to be weak and easily tempted, and therefore more likely to fall in with the devil and practise witchcraft.[118] In the West, as in the East, unmarried women were considered especially lustful and vulnerable to the snares of the devil and widows in particular could pose a danger to society. In 1540 Arnaldo Albertini, the bishop of Patti in Sicily, argued old women became witches because they could not find lovers.[119] Again, older women were feared not just for their independence but for their passion, awakened through marriage, but unsatisfied in widowhood.

Moreover, as with the *gello*, many of the crimes associated with the witch were related to her treatment of children. In her study of early modern witchcraft in Augsburg, Lyndal Roper argues that "the primary issue in what we might term a stereotypical case of witchcraft was maternity".[120] In particular, the witch was supposed to hunger after unbaptised babies, which were deemed an especially suitable sacrifice to the devil. [121] The victims of witchcraft, like those of the *gello*, were largely new-born children and women who had just given birth.[122] In both cases it was often older women who were accused of the deed. In the West, the social group that was most likely to be accused of witchcraft was the older, unattached woman over the age of fifty or sixty.[123] Once again, those accused of harming children cited envy as the motivation for their crimes. Those women who had been unable to bear children were particularly suspect and one woman declared that she had turned to witchcraft as a consequence of not being allowed to marry and become a mother.[124] In the West as in the East, childbirth was an extremely perilous

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[118] Robert Muchembled, 'Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality' in Ankarloo, *Witchcraft*, p. 151.
[119] Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 144.
[120] Roper, *Oedipus*, p. 203.
[121] Christopher Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's *De la démonomanie des sorciers*: the Logic of Persecution' in Sydney Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), p. 79.
[122] Roper, *Oedipus*, p. 201.
[123] Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 139.
[124] Roper, *Oedipus*, p. 215.

time, when the mother and child were particularly at risk from the envy of others.

In discussing witchcraft, Allatios, the ecumenical scholar, is tracing similarities in the popular culture of East and West. When he associates the *gello* with witches, he touches on an issue current in the seventeenth-century West. The late sixteenth through to the early seventeenth century has been hailed as the zenith of the witch trials, with the slaughter reaching a peak in the 1630s.[125] It might seem surprising that Allatios broaches this issue, given his underlying desire to present the Orthodox church in a positive light. Geographically, the trials and burnings were not evenly spread, however, and it was in eastern Europe that the greatest impact was felt. In contrast, the number sentenced to the stake for witchcraft in Italy during this period was very low.[126] In Italy, doubts over the accuracy of the claims of the accused witches and their ability to carry out the acts described in their statements led to a reluctance to investigate and prosecute claims of witchcraft. Increasingly, the diabolic element was played down by the Holy Office, who viewed witchcraft as deluded and foolish rather than as involving satanic pacts.[127] The recipient of Allatios' letter, Zacchias, was also extremely sceptical of witchcraft. In his medical practice he preferred to look for natural causes rather than take what he saw as the easy and lazy option of ascribing disease to witchcraft.[128] Nevertheless, witchcraft was a concept with which Zacchias was familiar: as a papal doctor, he was required to distinguish between those sicknesses caused by witchcraft and those with natural causes.

Problems Surrounding Orthodox Marriage in the Seventeenth Century

Allatios therefore discusses the *gello* in terms of a phenomenon with which his western contemporaries would have been very familiar.

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[125] Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 175; Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), p. 19.

[126] William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe* (Brighton, 1983), pp. 69–70; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 81.

[127] Gentilcore, *Bishop*, pp. 12; 241; John Tedeschi, 'The Roman Inquisition and Witchcraft: an Early Seventeenth-Century "Instruction" on Correct Trial Procedure', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 200 (1983), 175–76; John Tedeschi, 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch' in Ankarloo, *Witchcraft*, p. 94.

[128] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iii. tit. 1. q. v. pp. 229 ff.; lib. ii. tit. ii. q. xiii, p. 189.

Witchcraft, however, caused far greater concern in the West than in the East and in placing the *gello* within an occidental framework Allatios misses the connection between the *gello* and developments in the Orthodox marriage market. In the seventeenth century and even more so in the eighteenth there was increasing concern over practices relating to the dowry which had an adverse effect on the chances of Orthodox women, especially younger daughters, securing husbands and producing legitimate Orthodox offspring. It is impossible, given the lack of information, to trace in any detailed way the effects of such social changes on popular belief. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that central to the idea of the *gello* was the malevolent and fatal jealousy that single women were thought to manifest towards their counterparts who were married with children.

There is evidence to suggest that during the early modern period women, particularly younger sisters, were finding it increasingly difficult to marry. Naxian marriage contracts from this time indicate that there was a trend towards preferential treatment of the eldest daughter.[129] This often meant that the wealth of the family went to the eldest, leaving her younger sisters without a dowry and unable to find a husband. In one case, three sisters were still at home and unmarried fourteen years after the wedding of the oldest daughter because she had been given the entire inheritance.[130] This example underlines the importance of the dowry for finding a partner. It was a vital part of the arrangement drawn up between the families of the bride and groom, constituting an investment in the next generation and a substantial part of the economic basis of the new household. In the eyes of the laity this contract was so central to the union that the canonists had to emphasise that it alone could not make a marriage or even a betrothal: marriage was a sacrament, and needed the prayer and blessing of a priest to transmit the grace.[131] Nevertheless, the church upheld the parental right to make such contracts, doling out fines and penances if one side subsequently broke

[129] Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 282–84; 286.

[130] Ibid., p. 284.

[131] Patrick Viscuso, 'The Formation of Marriage in Late Byzantium', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35 (1991), 313; 317; 324; Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 223–34: in 1690 the metropolitan of Paronaxia laid down the procedure which had to be followed for a legal marriage to have taken place, stressing that the priest had to officiate at the betrothal and marriage ceremonies and the couple had to go to church, confess and take communion.

their obligation.[132] A patriarchal edict of 1701 even ordered compensation to be paid to the injured party.[133]

Both church and laity therefore recognised the vital contribution of the dowry to the continuation of the family line. Yet it was not only in Naxos that preferential dowering had taken hold. Throughout the Cyclades the same pattern emerges. For example, Tournefort recorded that on Mykonos, rather than dividing the wealth equally, the eldest daughter was awarded the majority of her parents' wealth.[134] The trend was felt even further afield, in areas that existed under very different political and economic conditions. In the same year that Tournefort visited Mykonos, the patriarch of Constantinople Kallinikos II reacted to the pleas of the population of Ioaninna and issued an edict, castigating parents:

> who are about to wed their eldest daughter, [and] malevolently endow to her almost all their belongings and provide nothing at all for their remaining children taking possession of their share as well, which belongs to them [the younger children] and which they should enjoy as participants in their ancestral property and inheritance.[135]

This is one of the earliest of many rulings concerning the amount given in goods, or later money, in the form of the dowry to the bride and in premarital gifts, called *trachoma* or *charisma*, to the husband's family. Even so, Kallinikos was reacting to a well-established custom, writing that he wished to limit "this long and vile habit". Moreover, it is likely that there had been discontent over this practice for some time before the community went to the effort and expense of complaining to the patriarch and the causes of the situation became sufficiently clear for him to act on them. Although the majority of edicts come from the eighteenth century onwards — there are fourteen prohibitions between 1700 and 1844 — the origins of the problem were firmly rooted in the seventeenth.[136]

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[132] Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxx, p. 129. For a Naxian example see Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 234.

[133] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 234.

[134] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 97; Thevenot, *Travels*, pt. 1, pp. 55–57.

[135] Manouel Io. Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις ἐπιστολαί λύσεις, θεσπίσματα τῶν ἁγιωτάτων Πατριαρχῶν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Constantinople, 1888; facsimile reprint, Leipzig, 1970), vol. 1, p. 70; trans. in N.I. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Rule* (Thessaloniki, 1967), pp. 58–59. See also Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις*, vol. 2, pp. 444 ff. for further examples.

[136] Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 57.

Pantazopoulos assumed that Kallinikos was more worried about the *trachoma* or premarital gifts than the dowry.[137] Unlike the dowry, which was inalienable and remained the property of the wife, the *trachoma* became the property of the husband and stayed with him even after death or divorce. It alienated property from the maternal family line, and the goods would not necessarily pass to the grandchildren produced from the union. However, in the excerpt above, Kallinikos' concern was not the alienation of property from the family, but its grossly unequal distribution. The preferential endowment denied the right of the siblings to take a share of their parents' property. As a consequence, his edict sought to restrict the amount given to the eldest daughter in her dowry (as well as the premarital gift) and laid down appropriate amounts that should be awarded to successive sisters. Thus he not only made provisions regarding the proportion of property to be distributed between the younger daughters, he also set absolute limits on the amount to be given out in the dowry.

His action suggests one reason for the unequal distribution of property amongst the children was the pressure to increase dowry payments. This is also indicated by the frequent measures taken to limit the jewellery that women could wear.[138] In some areas the wealth of the population was displayed in the dress of the womenfolk. Travellers described the women of Chios as "adorned with precious Stones, and Gemmes, and Jewels about their neckes, and hands, with Rings, Chaines, and Bracelets."[139] The French traveller Thevenot records that the Turkish governor demanded a vast sum from the aristocracy of that island to pay for a visit from the sultan, judging their wealth by the splendid appearance of their wives.[140] The finery was understood as an indication of status and wealth. This explains why dowries and display of jewellery were frequently linked together in patriarchal edicts. It was considered that the display of wealth fuelled the escalation of dowries. The greater the display of wealth, the richer the family was presumed to be, and the higher the expectations of the dowry by the family of the bridegroom. By

[137] Ibid., p. 59.
[138] Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις*, vol. 1, pp. 68; 70 ff.
[139] Lithgow, *Discourse*, p. 92. For other examples see Argenti, *Costumes*, pp. 63–69.
[140] Thevenot, *Travels*, part 1 p. 101.

restricting the display, the patriarchs sought to stem the rise of marriage payments.[141]

The fierce competition over dowries may point to an imbalance in the marriage market during this period. As with most aspects of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Aegean very little research has been carried out in this area but there are indications that differences in mobility between males and females meant that the marriage market was biased against women during this period. Male occupations laid them more open to life-threatening dangers or capture by pirates.[142] There are frequent reports of the activity of corsairs who seized men from their fishing vessels, or during raids on the land, and condemned them to the galleys or sold them at slave markets.[143] Emigration also removed young men from society. Sometimes married men would travel to distant places looking for opportunities and take their wives and families with them. Others would go abroad alone, hoping eventually to return with wealth to marry, or, alternatively, leave their wives to manage the family plots alone, without news of their husbands for many years.[144] In common with the Byzantine period, abandonment remained a legitimate reason for divorce and was allowed in cases where the husband had been absent for more than five years with no contact with his wife.[145]

Single men too, would leave their place of birth, aiming for Smyrna or further afield to set up business.[146] Educational opportunities in western Europe could also withdraw young men from society. In the wealthier sectors of society families would send promising youths to study in the colleges of Italy, and some, like Allatios, would never return to live in their home country. Those attending the Greek College at Rome, however, were probably disqualified from marriage on other grounds. They were to be trained as priests of the Uniate rite, and therefore would not marry. Back in the Ottoman

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[141] Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 158.

[142] Richard, *Relation*, p. 214.

[143] Kyriakos Simopoulos, *Ξένοι Ταξιδιῶτες στὴν Ἑλλάδα 333 μ.Χ.–1700* (Athens, 1994), vol. 1, p. 101.

[144] Wheler, *Journey into Greece*, p. 63.

[145] Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 252–53.

[146] For an example see Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 305. The many divinatory practices reveal this concern. See Jacob Spon, *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant. Fait aux années 1675 et 1676 par Iacob Spon, docteur medecin aggregé à Lyon et George Wheler, gentilhomme Anglois* (Lyons, 1678), vol. 1, p. 121; Wheler, *Journey into Greece*, p. 30; and also Allatios, *De opin.* XXII–XXIII, pp. 166–68.

Empire, although Orthodox priests could wed, monks remained celibate and monasticism during the Turkish period continued to attract converts. In contrast, Orthodox nunneries were extremely scarce because of fear over the safety of women inside the convent.[147] The consequence of an environment where men were mobile and only the eldest daughter received a sufficient dowry to wed reached its extreme on the island of Karpathos. There the inheritance of the parents went exclusively to the first-born male and female children. While the younger sons left the island, the younger daughters remained unmarried in their parents' household.[148]

Problems arising from the imbalance of the sexes may have been exacerbated by the changing economic situation. Wealth began to flow into Aegean society, leading to an increase in the use of money. The extent to which this occurred in different communities varied and care must be taken not to overestimate the development that took place, but there is evidence that these changes affected the dowry. During the seventeenth century, money, rather than goods alone, started to appear in marriage settlements. Kasdagli identifies a slight increase in the money included in Naxian settlements, particularly among merchant families.[149] In other areas, where trade formed a greater part of the economy, gifts of money appear more frequently. In the Chian dowry documents discussed by Vizvises, money is listed as part of the settlement. It should be noted too that these documents come from the villages rather than Chios Town which was the centre of the merchant community. This practice of including cash payments was condemned by patriarchs in their dowry legislation, suggesting that it was viewed as one of the causes of dowry inflation.[150] Underlying all these edicts was the fear that undowered daughters, like the three sisters from Naxos, would remain unmarried. A later proclamation expressed this concern explicitly:

> the daughters that were provided with the most part of *trachoma* were married, whereas those who had nothing to offer, and were in want at the time of marriage, melted away together with their own fathers and mothers and remained unripe.[151]

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[147] Kasdagli, *Land*, pp. 240–41.
[148] Ibid., p. 311.
[149] Ibid., pp. 227–28; 320–21.
[150] Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις*, vol. 1, 1970, vol. 2, pp. 444 ff., where Neophytos states that the dowry should be granted in goods not in money, suggesting he identified the introduction of money gifts as the cause of dowry inflation.
[151] Letter (1736) of the metropolitan of Athens to Patriarch Neophytos VI

In this case, the ruling concerns the *trachoma*. However, both the escalation of the *trachoma* and the unequal provision of dowries upset the traditional patterns of inheritance. Perhaps the *trachoma* and the dowry should be seen as part of the same trend, responding to both the vagaries of the marriage market and economic changes. The aim of both, after all, was to secure an advantageous match for the daughter and provide an economic basis for the production of descendants. With the option of becoming a nun excluded for many, the alternatives to matrimony in the seventeenth century were far less acceptable to the church. Patriarch Neophytos IV (1688–89) was concerned that the lack of opportunity to contract a Christian marriage would drive young women to:

> the evils resultant from need. Because they either schemed to capture men in passion, or, driven to despair, they were reduced to lawless *nikâh* and to most disreputable downfalls.[152]

The 'lawless *nikâh*' to which Neophytos refers, denotes a Turkish civil marriage. There were two types of union which could be contracted between a Turkish man and a Christian woman. One, *nikâh kenisé*, was a form of cohabitation with a Christian slave. The other, *nikâh munkuta* (or *mut'a*), called *kepinion* in Greek, was a temporary marriage which could take place between a Muslim man, and a woman of a 'religion of the book', either Christian or Jewish.[153] Permanent Turkish marriages could only occur between Muslims. In the above quotation, Neophytos is probably referring to *kepinion*. The procedure of taking 'Wives of *Kebin*', as Thevenot calls them, was as follows:

> a Man goes to the Cady, tells him, that he takes such an one to Wife, to whom he promises to pay so much if he divorce her; all this the Cady writes down, and gives the writing to the Man, who (after that) may keep the Wife as long as he pleases, or send her going when he thinks fit, paying her what he promised, and maintaining the Children he hath had by her.[154]

(1734–1740; 1743–1744), corresponding to the earlier one of Patriarch Neophytos IV (1686–1689), Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 60. The necessity of a dowry for contracting marriage is also expressed in the Naxian documents. See Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 257 where a monk built a house for his sister because his mother had left her without a dowry or, as he describes it, had 'left her hopeless.'

[152] See n. 150 above for a discussion of this letter. Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 60.

[153] Ibid., pp. 93–94. See also Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1668), p. 154.

[154] Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 55.

This indicates why the patriarch made a connection between lack of dowry and marriage by *kepinion*. With *kepinion* the woman's family did not provide a dowry, but her prospective husband agreed to award her a certain amount of money at the end of the relationship. Contracting a marriage to a Turk in this way was seen as an indication of poverty. Without a dowry or *trachoma* the younger daughters were unable to contract lawful marriages.[155] On the one hand, they might 'fade away' with their parents, failing to achieve immortality through their descendants. On the other hand, they might turn to alternative relationships or illicit liaisons either from 'need' or from the 'passion' of their nature. Outside the protection of marriage, their 'natural passions', or poverty would lead to their disgrace.

Despite the necessity of contracting relationships of *kepinion*, they could be seen as scandalous and harmful to the woman's reputation.[156] They were not accepted by the church and through them the women did not redeem their natures and achieve the high status that they got from marriage. These unions were seen as the result of passion, contracted through the impulse of the female nature, rather than a precaution taken to restrain female desires. Nor did the production of children redeem such women. The offspring from these relationships did not have the same status as those born from a married couple. All the children born from *kepinion* came under the guardianship of the father, and, if he was Muslim, also followed his faith and were lost to Orthodoxy.[157] Even children of two Christians joined by *kepinion* were not accorded certain privileges: they were technically illegitimate and could not continue the family and inherit property in the same way as legitimate children.[158] If the husband married another woman in the Orthodox ceremony subsequent to a relationship of *kepinion*, in matters of inheritance, the legitimate issue would take preference over the other offspring. Illegitimate children had no automatic right to their father's property, and inheritance,

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[155] See Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 299.

[156] Ibid., p. 384 n. 95.

[157] Scrofani, *Voyage en Grèce*, vol. 1, p. 105.

[158] Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 254. Children from such liaisons did have some inheritance rights under Ottoman law, however. Kasdagli provides an example where a woman born from *kepinion* only lost her case because her opponent bribed the kadi. For other examples of *kepinion* in a wide variety of places see Pantazopoulos, *Law*, pp. 96–98; nn. 14–26; G. Dimitrokallis, 'Μιὰ περίπτωση γάμου μετὰ καπινίου στὴ Νάξο', *Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 39–40 (1972–1973), 290–94.

as we have seen, was an important method of ensuring continuity between generations.[159]

The church tried to outlaw *kepinion* on numerous occasions. In 1614 the metropolitan of Paronaxia excommunicated a Christian man who had abandoned his first wife and taken another in *kepinion*, 'living with her illegally'.[160] More general prohibitions, as opposed to individual rulings, followed later in the century and in 1671 under the patriarchate of Parthenios IV an imperial decree declared such relationships between Christians illegal.[161] It seems to have had little effect for ecclesiastical prohibitions were issued frequently over the next two centuries and marriages of *kepinion* are found up to the wars of independence.[162] Marriages between Christians and Muslims were also proscribed. In the privileges handed out to various Cycladic Islands, the sultan outlawed unions between Muslim men and Christian women unless the woman had voluntarily converted before marriage.[163] Once again, this legislation seems to have had little impact on the situation, with many examples occurring until the end of the Turkish period.[164]

The transition enacted through the wedding and the subsequent birth of the first child, which was always in danger from threats and curses from rivals and the harmful results of jealousy, became even more fraught in these difficult times. Therefore in the seventeenth century it became increasingly difficult for women who anxiously peered into their future — and we should remember that the results of the divination never allowed the possibility of remaining unmarried — to achieve a successful marriage. With the changing situation and greater competitiveness of the marriage market it became more problematic to secure a match for the younger daughters. Society

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[159] See chapter 4, p. 99 and chapter 5 p. 128 above.

[160] Dimitrokallis, 'Μιὰ περίπτωση γάμου', 292.

[161] Ibid., 290; Kasdagli, *Land*, p. 254; Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 99.

[162] See for example the prohibition in Ginis, *Περίγραμμα*, p. 145 and other examples in Pantazopoulos, *Law*, pp. 98–99.

[163] Ginis, *Περίγραμμα*, 119; 124; Argenti, *Chius Vincta*, pp. 210; 219 where the prohibitions against forcing women to marry against their will occurs in the same section as the ban on forced conversions. Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 96 n. 15 argued that the legislation was introduced to prevent forced conversion and wife snatching. Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 314–17, however, provided a different explanation: Christian-Turkish marriages were outlawed because children born from such liaisons were not thought fit to become Muslims.

[164] Pantazopoulos, *Law*, pp. 96–98; nn. 14–26.

still had no respectable alternative to matrimony for women, especially during a period when there were few convents. They had to fend for themselves the best they could, either remaining at home, or contracting less respectable liaisons. These relationships brought nothing of the status or social fulfilment achieved by becoming a wife or mother. The concern over dowries suggests that at the end of the seventeenth century and for much of the eighteenth more women than before fell outside the ideal relationship of marriage. Such an environment would have increased the tension between the eldest daughter, successfully married with children, and her spinster sisters at home. This created an ideal situation for jealousy to flourish, providing the *gello* with fertile ground.

In conclusion, for Ottoman Greeks in the seventeenth century, marriage was an important social rite and as such was marked by a profusion of rituals and beliefs. In spite of this, Allatios' text, which takes as its subject matter the beliefs and practices of the 'common people', does not include a discussion of marriage, even though some of the excerpts he uses are closely connected to it. Instead, he places these beliefs in a western context. In doing so he ignores the tensions within the marriage market at this time which are relevant to the understanding of the *gello* in seventeenth-century Greece. Allatios' failure to consider matrimony in any context should lead us to question his underlying concerns. Perhaps this omission occurs because he and his closest associates never married and so he had less experience, information and interest in it. Moreover, the question of marriage, unlike witchcraft, was not a current topic of concern in his circles; nor did it play a role in the ecumenical discussions as it was not a point of doctrine over which the two churches differed. However, it was a growing concern within the eastern church during this period. Allatios, who often connects the popular beliefs to ecclesiastical debates, fails to do so in this case. His neglect of such an important ritual reveals his lack of knowledge of the interaction between popular Orthodoxy and the society in which it was situated. This arises partly from his view of history where customs always remain the same and therefore are not affected by current debates, an outlook which allows him to focus on texts rather than personal experience.[165] Furthermore, it reveals that his own interest in the

[165] Allatios, *De opin.*, I, p. 114.

'opinions of the Greeks today' centres on issues which play a role in the discussion of the relationship between the two churches. Allatios does not consider the question of marriage because his interest in popular beliefs lies in those areas which concerned an ecumenist.

In the next chapter we will consider Allatios' treatment of beliefs surrounding death which, in contrast to marriage, were pertinent to one of the important doctrinal differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE *VRYKOLAKAS*

The Revenant in Seventeenth-Century Greek Society

The chapters relating to the *vrykolakas* are probably the best-known passages of *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus*. In his collection of vampire lore, the folklorist Montague Summers quoted extensively from these chapters, remarking on Allatios' detailed treatment of the topic.[1] Travellers too, notably Robert Pashley in the nineteenth century, have made use of Allatios' text to shed light on their own experiences, but it is not only more recent authors with their interest in folklore who have bowed to Allatios' authority on this subject; writers nearer his own time also acknowledged his expertise.[2] As early as 1676 his chapters on the Greek revenant were quoted by Georgius Fehlavius in his commentary on Christophoros Angelos' *Enchiridium* to elucidate the excommunication ritual of the Greeks.[3] Tournefort, who provided one of the most vivid reports of the *vrykolakas*, had also clearly read Allatios.[4] Standing at the intersection between Greek and Latin culture on this as on other matters, Allatios' account of the so-called Greek vampire was highly influential on western descriptions of the phenomenon. Perhaps because of his ability to explain things for a western audience, Allatios' own interpretation has never been questioned. In chapters 7 and 8 we will present a discussion of the evidence provided by Allatios, placing the beliefs he considers in the context of early modern Greek society and Orthodox theology, before moving towards an evaluation of Allatios' own interpretation of the sources.

It may be misleading to use the term vampire in the context of the Greek revenant. The vampire with which we in the West are

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[1] Summers, *Europe*, p. 223.

[2] Robert Pashley, *Travels in Crete* (London, 1837; facsimile reprint, Athens, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 227–30.

[3] Angelos, *Enchiridium*, ch. 25, pp. 526–55.

[4] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103 margin notes.

most familiar is the Dracula of Bram Stoker and 'B' movie fame, with his long flowing cape, fangs, and thirst for blood. Although both the Greek vampire and its so-called Transylvanian cousin are revenants, that is, resurrected dead bodies, they differ greatly in style and in their relationships with members of society. It is not helpful to call this creature a vampire as the word carries with it connotations alien to the phenomenon. What should be used in its stead? A plethora of terms for the revenant existed, with each area having its own variation of the species. It was called among other things, *vrykolakas*, *vourvoulakas* and *katachthonios*.[5] *Vrykolakas*, however, is the most common Greek word for the creature and so seems to be the most suitable.

Although the *vrykolakas* exhibited none of the traditional behaviour of the 'Transylvanian' vampire, nonetheless it had the ability to cause great terror within a community. The creature was so frightening that it could drive whole villages to decamp. Tournefort described the reaction of a village in Mykonos which discovered a *vrykolakas* in its midst:

> Whole families quitted their Houses, and brought their Tent-Beds from the farthest parts of the Town into the publick Place, there to spend the night. They were every instant complaining of some new Insult; nothing was to be heard but Sighs and Groans at the approach of Night: the better sort of People retired into the Country.[6]

For Allatios too it was the most terrifying of the *exotika* he discussed, for he wrote that they were all bearable except for the *vrykolakas*. This frightening creature could be recognised by its characteristic appearance. It was found in the tomb in a black and swollen state, with teeth, hair and nails intact and because it had not completely rotted away it was said to be '*alytos*', literally 'indissoluble'. According to Allatios, a *vrykolakas* consisted of the body of an excommunicated man whose corpse had been possessed by the devil. He reports that the possessed corpse rampaged round the town causing havoc and often bringing death to those it met. Allatios' description is a curious one, however, because it does not fit exactly with any of the

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[5] A wide range of these terms can be found in, Stelios A. Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες: Δοξασίες, προλήψεις καὶ παραδόσεις σὲ καταγραφὲς ἀπὸ τοὺς ἀρχαίους καὶ μεταβυζαντινοὺς χρόνους* (Athens, 1989), ch. 1.

[6] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 105.

sources he presents. In the first example he provides, a canon from the sixteenth-century *Nomokanon* of Malaxos, excommunication had nothing whatsoever to do with the creation of the *vrykolakas*. Although the devil did enter the dead body, the church had not previously indicated through excommunication which bodies were open to the devil, and the individual was not to blame in any way for the possession. Instead, the source points out that the devil was given the power to enter the body by the failure of the local community to follow the prescriptions of the church. In Allatios' other sources, even those taken from the same *Nomokanon*, it was the excommunication of the body which caused it to remain undissolved, and absolution which allowed it to disintegrate.[7] Once the body had been absolved, the effects of the excommunication also disappeared. In the excerpt attributed to Cassian, which Allatios takes from the *Enchiridium* of Christophoros Angelos, a dissenting bishop was excommunicated by the others at a church council and remained undissolved.[8] One hundred years later another synod was held in the same place and this time the bishops absolved their long-dead colleague saying, "A bishop struck by anathema sinned against the church and the church excommunicated him. We are also the church and we forgive him, since it is human to sin."[9] In this source the creation and dissolution of the body were controlled exclusively by the church. Therefore Allatios' sources divide into two groups, and only the second group understands excommunication as central to the creation of the revenant.

Allatios' sources were also at variance over the discovery of the body. In the first group it was the laity who 'found' the undissolved corpse; in the second, where the deceased had been excommunicated, it was the clergy.[10] The laity had no difficulty at all in sensing the presence of the corpse: the *vrykolakas* revealed itself to the people through dreams and appearances, which the church believed were deceptions of the devil. There was no question of having to search for the body — it appeared of its own volition and terrified the neighbourhood. In contrast, in one example from the second group

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[7] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV–XVIII, pp. 149–58.

[8] Although Christophoros Angelos attributes this to Cassian, the excerpt is not contained in any of the extant works of the Church Father. It may have been written by a later writer of the same name.

[9] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153; Angelos, *Enchiridium*, p. 524.

[10] Compare the sources in Allatios, *De opin.* XXII, p. 143 to those in XIII–XVI, pp. 149–57.

of sources, the patriarch had to hold a conference with his clerics to try to remember where an excommunicated body had been buried.[11] In comparison to the wild rampaging of the *vrykolakas*, the excommunicated corpse or *tympaniaios* seems curiously passive.

Not only did the revenants in these two groups of sources exhibit different characteristics, they were also referred to by different names. While the creature is called a *vrykolakas* in the first extract from the *nomokanon*, in the other sources it is referred to as a *tympaniaios*. Of course, the names alone would not imply that they were different phenomena as there were many names associated with the *vrykolakas*, but the work of the anthropologist Juliet du Boulay suggests that the difference between them may go deeper than this. In her discussion of the *vrykolakas*, based on research carried out in a village in Euboea, she notes that the villagers distinguished between two categories of undissolved bodies. The village practised exhumation and secondary burial, a custom which is common in modern Greece. A body which was undissolved at the time of exhumation was not considered to be a *vrykolakas*, but 'a soul with sins'. Therefore action was taken to release the soul from the body, whereas, when a *vrykolakas* revealed itself, urgent action was required to destroy it.[12] A seventeenth-century source made a similar distinction between two types of undissolved body. Father Richard, a Jesuit missionary on the island of Santorini, added the following passage to his reports on the *vrykolakas*:

> There are other dead bodies in Greek cemeteries which, after fifteen or sixteen years — and sometimes twenty or thirty years, are found swollen up like balloons and when you throw or roll them on the ground they resound like drums; so they call them '*doupi*' [drum]. I can just assure you that the common opinion of the Greeks is that such swelling is the true mark of excommunication.[13]

These bodies, like the *tympaniaios*, could only have been discovered when the tomb was opened for some reason, probably to bury another corpse. The islanders clearly distinguished the bodies they found

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[11] Ibid., XVI, pp. 154–57, esp. p. 154; Manuel Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica Constantinopoleos*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn, 1849), pp. 118.2–124.21 esp. p. 118; Manuel Malaxos, *Historia politica Constantinopoleos*, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn, 1849), pp. 48.19–50.13.

[12] Juliet du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire: a Study of Cyclic Symbolism in Marriage and Death', *Man* 17 (1982), 222.

[13] Richard, *Relation*, pp. 224–25.

within from the true *vrykolakas* on the grounds of the inflated drum-like form of the corpse.[14] The *doupi* shows the same characteristics as the *tympaniaios*. It was also passive and had the same swollen appearance — the word '*tympaniaios*', like '*doupi*', indicates the 'drum-like' nature of the corpse. Most important of all, these features of the *doupi* were the result of excommunication.

Allatios' own experience with the undissolved body would seem to fall into the category of the *tympaniaios* on the grounds of its appearance: the corpse was "round as a small bag" and inflated to such an extent that the local youths used it as a trampoline until the priest stopped the disrespectful behaviour and closed the grave.[15] This undissolved body, like those in Euboea and Santorini, was discovered when the tomb was opened to inter another body, yet despite its similarities with the *tympaniaios*, Allatios includes it in his chapter dealing with the *vrykolakas* proper. He does not discuss the *tympaniaios* until the following chapter, which he opens by stating that:

> when the Greeks see similar bodies, which are discovered after death in cemeteries, undecayed and swollen, with skin stretched like a drum, they say that [these] are the bodies of the excommunicated.[16]

Allatios therefore implies that the body he saw in the tomb was both a *vrykolakas* and a *tympaniaios*. In fact he did not really make a clear distinction between the two types of revenant. For him the *vrykolakas*:

> is indeed the corpse of the most evil and criminal of men: often one excommunicated by his bishop. . . . The skin is stretched like a drum, and makes a noise in the same way as a drum if it is struck. Wherefore it is said to be 'τυμπανιαῖος' ['*tympaniaios*'].[17]

For Allatios, the two revenants were one and the same phenomenon. However, this does not seem to agree with the Orthodox understanding of the situation described above where the two revenants are distinguished from each other. Allatios' conflation of the two accounts therefore should not be accepted without investigation.

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[14] The inflated drum-like appearance of these corpses appears to distinguish them from the true *vrykolakas*.
[15] Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 148.
[16] Ibid., XIV, p. 149.
[17] Ibid., XII, p. 142.

The Vrykolakas

Much of the evidence for the *vrykolakas* comes from *nomokanones*, texts of ecclesiastical law which have been compiled over the centuries. These contain discussions of various aspects of life considered sinful by the church, guiding monks and secular clergy in their approach to a wide range of matters and laying down the penances which should be given for particular sins. The nature of the source presents a problem for an investigation into the Greek revenant. It is difficult to assess how far the information contained within the *nomokanones* reflects early modern concerns, as the canons were usually compiled from earlier texts. However, there is little information regarding the *vrykolakas* from the Byzantine period. The earliest editions of the *nomokanon*, which date to the ninth century, do not mention the *vrykolakas*. Moreover, had the belief been common in the eleventh century, Psellos would have included it in his treatises on popular beliefs. Allatios himself found no accounts earlier than those in the *nomokanon* of Malaxos. For the Byzantine period he can only offer extracts from the *Chronographia* of Theophanes the Confessor and the *Short History* of Nikephoros the Patriarch. The description of the behaviour of the population in these sources — hallucinating, walking the streets, committing murder and causing civil disorder — bears some resemblance to the accounts of the revenant, but the events described relate to the civil disturbance following the plague and there is no mention of the *vrykolakas* by name, nor of the reanimation of dead bodies.[18] Greenfield too in his extensive study of Byzantine demonology states that he has found no trace of the *vrykolakas*.[19]

The earliest account unearthed so far occurs in the canonical responses of Ioasaph of Ephesos (d. 1437) addressed to a certain priest of Crete called George Drazinos, but it was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that canons relating to the *vrykolakas* became prominent in the sources.[20] Of course the lack of evidence

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[18] Ibid., XIII p. 147; Theophanes the Confessor, *Theophanes Chronographia*, ed. Karl de Boor (Leipzig, 1963), vol. 1, (AM6238, AD 745/6) p. 423; Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. Cyril Mango (Washington, D.C., 1990), ch. 67, p. 138.

[19] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 295 n. 1028.

[20] Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη*, pp. 240–48. On Ioasaph of Ephesos see Patrick Viscuso, 'Vampires, not Mothers: the Living Dead in the Canonical Responses of Ioasaph of Ephesos', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 44 (2000), 169–70.

does not mean that the beliefs about the *vrykolakas* did not exist in the earlier period. However, there was a dramatic increase in accounts of the *vrykolakas* in *nomokanones* from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. This points to the late Byzantine and early Ottoman periods as the time when the belief claimed the attention of the ecclesiastical authors. In other words, in discussing the *vrykolakas*, the compilers of post-Byzantine *nomokanones* were expressing a current concern.[21]

As *nomokanones* were composed to help the church exert its authority over uncanonical practices, it is not surprising that these ecclesiastical accounts were extremely hostile to the belief in the *vrykolakas*: a penance of six years was laid down for those who disobeyed church rulings and burnt the body of the supposed *vrykolakas*.[22] The intention to extirpate or reform the practices surrounding the *vrykolakas*, which lay behind the ecclesiastical approach, suggests that the description of the creature in the *nomokanones* might not reflect the views of the laity. Rather than treating such discussions as representative of popular belief and practice, these texts should be viewed as a meeting point between the official church and the laity. From this perspective, the *nomokanones* provide evidence for two different approaches to the *vrykolakas*: the popular and the ecclesiastical. The problem with treating the accounts in *nomokanones* as faithful representations of popular perspectives is apparent even when something as basic as the name of the creature is considered. Both modern anthropology and early modern travellers' tales indicate that in each locality the revenant was known by different names and displayed differing characteristics. However, there was very little variation in the *nomokanones*, the revenant being referred to as either a *vrykolakas*- or, less often, a *katachthonios*. Its behaviour was always described in the same terms: walking in the roads, appearing in dreams and harming human beings and it is difficult to get any sense of local variations in belief. Thus a standardised belief was imposed through the *nomokanon*: the church was prescribing as well as proscribing.

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[21] See the accounts published in Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*; S. Lambros, 'Μάρκου Μοναχοῦ Σερρῶν «Ζήτησις περὶ Βουλκουλάκων»', *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 1 (1904), 336–55; S. Lambros, 'Κατάλογος τῶν κωδίκων τῶν ἐν Ἀθήναις Βιβλιοθηκῶν πλὴν τῆς Ἐθνικῆς. Γ΄ Κώδικες τῆς Βιβλιοθήκης Ἀλεξίου Κολυβᾶ', *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 12 (1915), 105–112; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες παρὰ Βυζαντινοῖς', *Ὅμηρος* 5 (1877), 502–505.

[22] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 144; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 709 n. 1, p. 460.

Ecclesiastical Approaches to the Vrykolakas

Although the *nomokanones* may not faithfully reflect the popular viewpoint, the ecclesiastical authorities needed to be aware of the key details of the popular approach in order to reform them. The attempt to change the beliefs of the laity is apparent in the various canons relating to the *vrykolakas*. In one type of canon, the author opposed the popular belief in the *vrykolakas* and wished to reformulate the popular practices in terms more acceptable to the church. (Henceforth this interpretation will be called 'the spiritual interpretation'). The ecclesiastical opposition to the belief is apparent from the very first sentence of the canon: "The dead man will not become a *vulkolaka*".[23] Instead the *vrykolakas* should be seen as the work of the devil, who, "desiring to deceive someone or other carries out these evil wonders for the purpose of bringing about disharmony."[24] Through this formulation, the church immediately placed the revenant in a cosmological context, positioning the *vrykolakas* in relation to God and the devil. Often at night the devil created an illusion of the *vrykolakas* and placed:

> in the minds of some men <a belief> that a dead man comes up to those whom he recognised from before and conversed with them. And they see other ghosts in waking dreams. At another time they see him on the road, either walking, or standing still, and not only this alone, but also strangling men.[25]

At this point in the text the church argued that the power of the devil was limited — the *vrykolakas* was only an illusion and had no real existence: "Oh, the stupidity of pitiful men. Does he who is dead walk among and kill the living? This is impossible"[26] Thus the church interpreted the phenomenon in terms of the devil, who worked through his traditional methods of illusion and deception in order to make the people believe in something that would anger God.

However, the ecclesiastical position seems inconsistent. Later in the account, the author suggested that rather than working purely through illusion, the devil actually took possession of the body, for the canon states, "since they are lacking in pure faith, the devil is

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

transformed and puts on the corpse of the dead man as if a piece of clothing."[27] There is an acknowledgement here that something other than an illusion had occurred but the emphasis continued to be on the ability of the devil to exert power over the imagination. The text continues: "that corpse, which has lain dead in the tomb for such a time appears to *them* [my italics] having flesh and blood and nails and hair." Thus it only appeared in this way to those who were poor in faith, who had expected to see the *vrykolakas*, and not to more pious members of the community. After people had seen the creature in their 'imaginations', they rushed to burn the body. The author of the canon now acknowledged that the corpse did have some existence outside the mind and laid down the procedure for cases when "a similar corpse is found, which is the work of the devil."[28] This concession was essential, for it allowed the church to apply some kind of remedy to the situation and act to dissolve the body. The *vrykolakas* was treated as if it was a case of possession, which allowed the church to proceed with the rite appropriate to such cases — exorcism. Nevertheless, the material existence of the creature was merely a consequence of the way the laity was deceived by the illusions of the devil into believing in the *vrykolakas*. The canon insisted that it was the poor faith of the laity and their belief in the reality of the *vrykolakas*, in contravention of the instructions of the church, that gave the devil the power to enter the dead man. If the people refused to believe in the *vrykolakas*, the author seems to be saying, such things would not exist.[29]

If this canon gave some credence to the belief in the *vrykolakas*, a second group of canons rejected it altogether and explained away the appearance of an undissolved body in the tomb, arguing that natural factors had retarded decomposition. (Henceforth this interpretation will be called the 'natural interpretation'.) In the normal state of affairs it was thought that the body began to dissolve into its constituent parts, which corresponded to the four humours, soon after death. In the case of the *vrykolakas*, insufficient air inside the tomb meant that the moisture could not be drawn up from the

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 366; 403–404 also discusses this text and notes the contradiction. However, he concludes that this is due to the existence of two opposing views within the church hierarchy.

corpse and therefore it failed to decompose. Since the moisture from the liquefaction of the humours could not escape because the tomb was sealed, it seeped into the dead body and caused it to swell up.[30] Although this process of decomposition was explained in terms alien to us, it rested on the classical theory of the four humours, which remained extremely influential throughout the Byzantine period. According to the theory, the body, like all matter, was made up of four basic components: the author of the *nomokanon* listed them as blood, phlegm, bile and juices.[31] Each of these was linked to one of the four elements. Blood was related to fire, for it was believed to be the source of the body's warmth; juices were associated with air, bile with earth, and phlegm with water. When the soul left the body, the physical matter returned to its constituent elements. After death the body cooled and, as the heat left the corpse, the blood seeped out; as the humour associated with fire, it could not remain in the colder temperature of the corpse. However, the juices were unable to escape to their natural element, air, because the tomb was sealed and instead they forced themselves into the body cavities of the corpse. This caused the body to bloat and created the distinctive appearance of the *vrykolakas*. The *vrykolakas* therefore should be understood purely in terms of natural causes. As a consequence of its emphasis on natural causes, the text provided no remedy for the *vrykolakas*: no action needed to be taken because nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.

Despite their different approaches, both interpretations provided by the canons were hostile to the popular belief in the *vrykolakas*. The spiritual interpretation refashioned the popular revenant in terms of the supernatural activity of the devil, understanding the physical state of the corpse as a reflection of the relationship between the community and God; the natural interpretation understood the existence of the body in terms of natural causes. The divergence in perspective of the two interpretations extends to their explanations of the appearance of the corpse. Characteristically, the *vrykolakas* looked red and bloody. The natural interpretation explained the appear-

[30] Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, p. 69; Lambros, 'Μάρκου Μοναχοῦ', 345.

[31] Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες', 504–505; Lambros, 'Μάρκου Μοναχοῦ', 345.

ance in terms of the normal process of decomposition but in the spiritual interpretation it had far more sinister implications.[32] Only once the soul had left, did the corpse lose its blood and begin to decay and therefore the appearance of the *vrykolakas* suggested that the soul remained trapped within the body. The behaviour of the *vrykolakas*, stalking through the streets, also required the presence of a soul, as the body could not act without one.[33] However, the church argued that it was only through God's power, exercised by his clergy in the form of excommunication, that the soul was permitted to remain in the body after death. In all other cases, the soul had to leave the body and could not return until the Day of Resurrection. Since the *vrykolakas* was not an excommunicate, the soul could not be retained within the corpse and thus the *vrykolakas* could have no real existence. If a body other than the *tympaniaios* remained preserved, it would mean that the devil had independent power on the earth, and could work outside the will of God. The presence of blood would imply that the devil had the power to bring the bodies back to a form of life, an anti-life, as it mocked the real resurrection on the Last Day, and prevented the pitiful victim achieving his/her eternal life. For this reason in the spiritual interpretation, the existence of the *vrykolakas* has to stem totally from the *illusions* of the devil and it was therefore important to stress that the appearance and behaviour of the *vrykolakas* only took on any kind of reality when God punished the community for its poor faith.

If the church displayed a reluctance to accept the real existence of the *vrykolakas*, even when formulated in terms of an act of the devil, why did it not reject the belief altogether? As shown above, some canons did follow this route but more seem to have followed the spiritual interpretation, where real existence was denied but the phenomenon was accepted in terms of a diabolic illusion. Both interpretations attempted to combat the lay beliefs and practices but in different ways. In the spiritual interpretation, where the church was less rigorous in its rejection of the *vrykolakas*, the burning of the corpse was considered to be the most heinous part of the belief and the penance was specifically related to this act:

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[32] Lambros, 'Μάρκου Μοναχοῦ', 345.
[33] Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες', 504.

> They burn that corpse and destroy it completely. The fools do not see that their punishment in that eternal and inextinguishable fire is already prepared for them in the terrible second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will burn for all eternity. They burn that corpse and destroy it in the present time, but in future time, namely on the Day of Judgement, they will give account of all such things before the terrible judge and they will hear from him their condemnation to go into the fire and be punished for all eternity. If, therefore, they repent with all their heart for this great wickedness which they have carried out, if they are lay people they should remain without communion for six years; if they are priests, they should be entirely deprived of their priesthood.[34]

The canon threatened terrible torment for those who cremated the body unless they showed great repentance, because destroying the body ended all hope of salvation for the deceased, as it made bodily resurrection impossible. Therefore, in the spiritual interpretation, the prime concern of the church was to prevent the laity from burning the body.

In contrast, the text that advocated the 'natural' explanation of the *vrykolakas*, aimed to wipe out the belief altogether. However, although it countered the belief with an alternative explanation of the undecomposed body, it was one which entailed a complete denial of the experience of the laity. An explanation of the *vrykolakas* in terms of natural causes could not explain why particular kinds of individuals became *vrykolakes*. Nor did it take into account the other phenomena associated with the body, such as the attacks on property and family members. For the laity the *vrykolakas* was not just an explanation of an undissolved body: people saw *vrykolakes* walking in the roads, causing disruption *before* the tomb was opened. The discovery of the body validated the popular experience of events following the death, but was not the sum total of that experience. Because the spiritual interpretation did not oppose the belief completely, it could acknowledge the popular experience, while reinterpreting it as an illusion of the devil. Moreover, by emphasising the proper role of the church in dealing with the *vrykolakas*, the canon provided an alternative way of disposing of the undissolved body. It no longer had to be burnt but could be exorcised by the church. This approach was also more meaningful to members of the clergy.

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[34] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 145.

In spite of the church's hostility towards the belief in the *vrykolakas*, clergymen and monks related stories of their experiences with this kind of undissolved body; the abbot of Amorgos was one of the informants of the Jesuit missionary, Father Richard.[35] With such a wide constituency of belief, including those who were charged with correcting the errors of the laity, a complete denial of the *vrykolakas* would have been unsuccessful in eradicating the practice of burning the body that was so abhorred by the church.

The Popular Approach to the Vrykolakas

Disposal of the Body

The *nomokanones* reveal that the church was concerned with reforming lay practices and beliefs surrounding the *vrykolakas* but they also provide some details of the popular approach. In order to counter popular practices, *nomokanones* included information about key features of the lay belief that the church wished to correct: the creation of the creature, its nature and the method of its disposal. In this section the evidence from *nomokanones* will be placed alongside accounts from travellers' tales which describe popular beliefs and practices in action.

Ecclesiastical accounts express most concern over the popular tendency to cremate the undissolved body. Travellers' tales confirm this predilection. In the accounts of Joseph Pitton de Tournefort and Father Richard the respective populations of Mykonos and Santorini used fire to destroy the *vrykolakas*.[36] Allatios too comments on the details of the cremation:

> In order that the body of the *vulkolaka* stands upright while the prayers are recited, they support it with wooden staves. When it falls into the fire, they place three bricks under its head in a certain way.[37]

Did the church have any success in its attempts to reform this aspect of the popular practice? It is impossible to chart the changing lay perspectives of the *vrykolakas* because of lack of evidence but it is possible to examine the extent to which the laity conformed to ecclesiastical prescriptions during the early modern period. Evidence from

[35] Richard, *Relation*, pp. 212–13.
[36] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, pp. 103–107; Richard, *Relation*, pp. 208–26.
[37] Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 145.

the missionary Father Richard shows the population following the methods laid down by the church. He tells of the body of an Orthodox priest's daughter, which was found undissolved:

> It happened here some years ago to the body of Caliste, the daughter of a Greek priest. [Her body] being found intact, she was exorcised by a Greek priest who passed for Orthodox and in the presence of everyone [the body] began to lose its weight and become so odorous that no one was able to stay in the church. Thus it was buried immediately and she no longer appeared as before.[38]

In this instance the exorcism was completely successful. As the priest pronounced the words, the body began to dissolve. The *vrykolakas* was never seen again, proving the efficacy of the exorcism.

It was not only priests' families who were law abiding and sought out clergymen to solve their problems with the *vrykolakas*. In Tournefort's account too, the population of Mykonos Town called in the priests to deal with the issue.[39] Again, Richard recounts a story of a tradesman from Patmos who had died away from home.[40] The sailors who transported him realised that he had become a *vrykolakas* but did not mention this to anyone. However:

> in a little while the dead man revealed what he was for he began to cause so much terror, entering houses by night, shouting, howling and hitting, so that [there were] more than fifteen people [who] died in a few days either from fright or from blows. The priests and the monks of the place did everything in their power to stop the course of such a fatal tragedy.[41]

In such cases the body was often placed in a different tomb and the burial rites performed again, in addition to the exorcism.[42] In the three examples cited above, the church was the first port of call for the laity when faced with the threat of the *vrykolakas*. This is representative of the examples from the early modern period. In nearly all cases the local villagers turned to the church before taking any action against the body themselves. Thus the attempts of the church to persuade the laity to abandon the cremation of the body had

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[38] Richard, *Relation*, pp. 210–11.
[39] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103.
[40] Richard, *Relation*, pp. 213–15.
[41] Ibid., p. 215.
[42] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 151; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 74, pp. 114–15.

some effect on the habits of the laity. Ecclesiastical exorcism was accepted by the laity as an effective and appropriate method of removing a *vrykolakas*. The church was now acknowledged to have special powers in this area and formed the first line of defence against the revenant. *Nomokanones* can therefore be seen as having affected the behaviour of the laity, meeting their needs and bringing the disposal of the *vrykolakas* into conformity with church teaching.

Unfortunately, exorcism did not always achieve the desired effect and sometimes the rites of the church were carried out 'in vain'.[43] The body remained entire and whole and continued to harass the local population. In the case of the unfortunate merchant from Patmos, the community turned to other more desperate and extreme measures to bring about the decay of the merchant's body. When the exorcisms failed, the priests decided that the ceremony had to be carried out at the place of death in order to be effective and instructed the sailors to take the body back to the merchant's home town:

> This did not happen because the sailors unloaded it at the first deserted island and instead of a tomb they set up a funeral pyre for it. After it had been reduced to cinders the apprehension and troubles ceased and the demon appeared to have lost its strength since the dead man appeared no more.[44]

Once again, the efficacy of the method was judged by whether or not the creature reappeared and in this case cremation succeeded where exorcism had failed.

Thus the lay approach to the *vrykolakas* was eclectic and opportunistic.[45] If one method did not succeed, after careful consideration another was applied, and reasons were found to explain away the failure of the original attempt. If one approach did not work this might be because of the order in which the ritual had been performed, or because a particular event had occurred during the process. The priest's failure to dissolve the body by exorcism could also be explained by the stubbornness or power of the demon. In other cases

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[43] Richard, *Relation*, p. 215.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Bodies were also destroyed by casting them into water (cf. W.M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* (London, 1835), vol. 4, p. 216), and priests as well as laity used the method of chopping the body into small parts before reburial. This appears to have been an acceptable method for disposing of the *vrykolakas*.

the ritual was deemed to have been performed incorrectly, and the error had allowed the demon to escape. In Mykonos, when the body failed to dissolve after the liturgical rites, the people decided to tear out the heart of the creature:

> on the tenth day they said one Mass in the Chappel where the Body was laid, in order to drive out the Demon which they imagin'd was got into it. After Mass they took up the Body, and got everything ready for pulling out its Heart.[46]

In Byzantine mystical thought the heart was the location of passion, feeling and also remembrance of God. This made it the target for the devil, who wanted to displace God in the heart of man. A report from Richard also testified that the heart was thought to hold a particular attraction for the devil. When Richard attended an investigation of a corpse which had been accused of being a *vrykolakas* he saw nothing out of the ordinary in its state of decay. The priest presiding over the meeting did not deny this, but a priest standing nearby replied that "it was enough that his heart was entire to enable it [the body] to be the seat of a demon."[47]

The villagers of Mykonos thought that by removing the heart they would remove the demon and if they burnt the heart with the demon trapped inside, it would also destroy the demon. Therefore "they were of [the] opinion it would be their wisest course to burn the Man's Heart on the Sea-shore".[48] They expected this to be the end of the disturbances, as usually, "with the smoke from the fire the demon loses his strength."[49] In this case, however, the "Execution did not make him a bit more tractable; he went on with his racket more furiously than ever."[50] What had gone wrong? Cremation of the heart should have put an end to the *vrykolakas*. The villagers believed that a mistake had been made in the ceremony. Mass should have been celebrated after they had extracted the heart, rather than before, because the liturgy would have sanctified and protected the body, preventing the demon from re-entering the corpse. As it was, when the liturgy was over, he was able to re-enter at his leisure.

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[46] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103.
[47] Richard, *Relation*, p. 222.
[48] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.
[49] Richard, *Relation*, p. 212.
[50] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.

Finally, when they could think of no other solution, the community resolved to burn the whole body to expel the demon:

> They knew not now what Saint to call upon, when of a sudden with one Voice, as if they had given each other the hint, they fell to bawling out all through the City, that it was intolerable to wait any longer; that the only way left, was to burn the *Vroucolacas* intire [sic]; that after so doing, let the Devil lurk in it if he could; that 'twas better to have recourse to this Extremity, than to have the Island totally deserted.[51]

Therefore, despite the efforts of the clergy, the population continued to resort to cremation as a solution to the problem of the *vrykolakas*. Although the laity did adopt the approach prescribed by the church, when it failed they turned to other methods. Moreover, burning the body was more successful than the rites carried out by the church, for there are no examples when the *vrykolakas* reappeared after cremation. However, the destruction of the body by fire was acknowledged to be an extreme measure and in almost all cases the matter was referred to the priest in the first instance. The population was aware of the dire consequences of burning the body and only turned to this method as a last resort.

Nevertheless, the laity did not lose faith in the power of the church when ecclesiastical rites alone failed to dispose of the body. Even after the failure of the exorcism, the church continued to play an important role in the process because the liturgy and prayers preceded the cutting out of the heart. When this also failed, the laity still did not reject the authority of the clergy:

> they meet night and morning, they debate, they make Processions three days and three nights; they oblige the Papas to fast; you might see them running from House to House, Holy-Water-Brush in hand, sprinkling it all about, and washing the doors with it; nay, they pour'd it into the mouth of the poor *Vroucolacas* . . . [but] the *Vroucolacas* was incorrigible, and all the Inhabitants were in a strange Consternation.[52]

For the laity, their methods and the methods of the church formed a unified system. It was the church that drew a dividing line. The clergy took part in the preparations but, abiding by the instructions in the *nomokanon*, they refused to be present at the cremation: "not

[51] Ibid., p. 106.
[52] Ibid., pp. 105–106.

one Papas would be at St George when the Body was burnt".[53] Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical authorities absorbed other practices from the laity. Although the church did not approve of burning, it did appear to recognise the efficacy of complete destruction of the body. One unfortunate man was exorcised all day and then hacked to pieces with an axe by the priests and buried in a new grave.[54] Some priests were less law abiding, however, and even the *nomokanones* recognised that priests might take part in cremations, stating that those who did so should be "entirely deprived of their priesthood."[55] When priests did preside over the ceremony, it took place with prayers and incense, illustrating once again the integration of these rituals into popular belief.

The Nature and Creation of the Vrykolakas *in Popular Orthodoxy*

If the church was at least partially successful in changing lay attitudes to the destruction of the *vrykolakas*, did it succeed in changing attitudes in other areas of the belief? The popular understanding of the nature of the *vrykolakas* is not so easily discerned from the *nomokanones* as the method of disposing of it. *Nomokanones* were insistent that the *vrykolakas* was not a dead man but an illusion of the devil. Once again, the strenuous rebuttal of a particular position by the church indicates the viewpoint of the laity — for the laity the *vrykolakas* was the body of the dead man — but beyond this the *nomokanones* tell us nothing. It is clear, at least, that the people did not follow the church prescription that the *vrykolakas* was merely an illusion of the devil. Tournefort's account has shown how frighteningly real the *vrykolakas* could be. Extracts from other travellers have also confirmed the *nomokanones*' description of the *vrykolakas* as a dead man or woman who returned to life and walked the streets. But how did the lay conception of the *vrykolakas* as a dead man (or woman) differ from the ecclesiastical understanding of the *vrykolakas* as a corpse possessed by the devil? Travellers' tales suggest that in popular accounts of the *vrykolakas* the person as a whole, not just the body, was animated. It marauded around town, causing chaos, paying particular attention to friends and relatives. It retained its individuality

[53] Ibid., p. 107.
[54] Richard, *Relation*, pp. 220–21. See also Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 281.
[55] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 145; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 709 n. 1, p. 460.

and the part of the person that animates and forms relationships: in contrast to the ecclesiastical conception, the popular *vrykolakas* retained its soul.

On the other hand, at least by the early modern period the *vrykolakas* was also understood in diabolic terms. Thus in Mykonos, when they saw the *vrykolakas*:

> they concluded, that the Deceas'd was a very ill Man for not being thoroughly dead, or in plain terms for suffering himself to be reanimated by Old Nick; which is the Notion they have of a *Vroucolacas*.[56]

The people, like the church, envisaged the *vrykolakas* in diabolic terms, which meant that the *vrykolakas* was placed within the general scheme of a battle between good and evil and could be dealt with as a possessed body using the traditional method of exorcism. However, the *vrykolakas* retained far more of the dead man's personality and characteristics than in the ecclesiastical formulation. The devil had reanimated the whole person, soul as well as body, not merely dressed himself in the corpse.[57]

It is even more difficult to discern from the *nomokanones* the popular ideas relating to the creation of the *vrykolakas*. The belief was not merely an explanation of the anomalous state of the body, for the appearance of the *vrykolakas* conformed to a natural stage of decomposition which all bodies pass through shortly after death.[58] However, only particular corpses were suspected of being *vrykolakes* and unearthed, and people were aware of the activity of the *vrykolakas* before the tomb was opened. The appearance of the body in the grave only confirmed their expectations. Why were certain deaths suspicious and susceptible to diabolic possession and others not? The phenomenon of the *vrykolakas* was suggested in the first instance by events that occurred before and shortly after death. The types of death that result in a *vrykolakas* have been catalogued at length by anthropologists and folklorists, and include suicides, those who have been murdered, those who died of plague and those who had been

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[56] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.

[57] In modern Greece it is believed that the soul is destroyed along with the body in the methods employed against the *vrykolakas*. Du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire', 222.

[58] Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 103 ff.

cursed.[59] The early modern examples fall into a number of these categories: Tournefort's *vrykolakas* was a man who had been murdered in a field and had lain there for several days undiscovered.[60] The *nomokanon* too tells us that sudden and violent death led to the creation of a *vrykolakas*.[61] Moreover, following the unexpected death of the merchant from Patmos, the body had to be shipped a certain distance after he had died. Even before the boat arrived at his home island the process of transformation had occurred. Sudden death through a virulent illness, such as the plague or black death could also cause a revenant to form.[62] These categories of the deceased are listed in the Orthodox Canon for the Dead with a special intercessory prayer requesting peace for them after death, suggesting that they in particular were restless.[63]

None of the examples of *vrykolakes* from Tournefort or Richard were brought about through cursing, but *nomokanones* describe the effect of a curse from a member of the family. One *nomokanon* states, if anyone was bound by the 'oath or curse' of a parent, "he will have the front parts of his body intact".[64] Similarly a prayer for the loosing of an undissolved body requests forgiveness for the body even if it had been bound through excommunication, through the curse of a father or mother, if the individual had cursed himself in some way, or had broken his oath.[65] Thus there was a range of different factors which had an adverse effect on the dissolution of the body. But why should a cursed person, or someone who had died in a particular way, display these symptoms after death?

The anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued "the body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious."[66] The state of the body for example may be a model for the relationship between the deceased individual and society, or between flesh and spirit.

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[59] Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 375–76; du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire', 221.
[60] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103.
[61] Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες', 504.
[62] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 142.
[63] Eastern Orthodox Church, 'Canon for the Dead', *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976), 105–106.
[64] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 151; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 71, pp. 111–12.
[65] Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 85–86.
[66] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), p. 115.

Durkheim's pupil, Robert Hertz, carried out a detailed investigation into perceptions of the body after death and examined the relationship between the mourners, the soul and the corpse. His examination concluded that the three were inextricably linked. There existed "a kind of symmetry or parallelism between the condition of the body . . . and the condition of the soul" and the ritual actions of the mourners that centred on the corpse had an effect on the bonds between body and soul.[67] Moreover, the state of the body also reflected the state of the relationship between the deceased and the community, that is, the process of "gradual disentanglement of the living and the deceased."[68] In anthropological terms the reciprocal relationship between the deceased and the community as well as that between the soul and the body played an important role in the period surrounding the death and burial of the corpse.

This model is useful for a consideration of the *vrykolakas*. In the case of the *vrykolakas*, the living and the dead remained very much entangled, so much so that authors have characterised *vrykolakes* as those who were overly affectionate towards their family.[69] Despite the belief in possession by a devil, the *vrykolakas* retained aspects of its personality and family and community relationships remained meaningful. One of the strangest accounts Father Richard records is of the cobbler, Alexander, who returned to his widow:

> After his death he appeared to his wife as if he were still alive: he came and worked in her house, mended his children's shoes, he went to draw water from the cistern and was often to be seen in the vales cutting wood to support his family.[70]

His relationship with his family seemed to have continued in death as it did in life, with no terrifying effects. Iannetis Anapliotis' relationships were not so happy. After his death he began to rush up and down the streets, harassing "particularly the houses of all the family and relations; but he bore much more of a grudge against

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[67] Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney and Claudia Needham (Aberdeen, 1960), p. 45.

[68] Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: the Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1995), p. 84.

[69] Georges Drettas, 'Questions de vampirisme', *Études Rurales* 97–98 (1985), 207; du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire', 236 quotes the Greek proverb: '*vrykolakas to soï kynegaei*': "the vampire hunts its own kindred."

[70] Richard, *Relation*, p. 212.

his wife."[71] In Alexander's case it was the community who took exception to him, and moved directly to the burning of the body. The community was reluctant to take action against Iannetis, as, "being held in esteem, they did not dare publish his name."[72] He had been one of the wealthiest and most notorious usurers of the island, and his status seems to have continued after death. The relationship of both men with their family and community remained important, yet threatening.

The importance of the relationship between the living and the dead was expressed in Orthodox worship through intercessionary prayers and masses said on the anniversary of the death of the individual. Ties with the dead were also expressed through the obligations of the family to the deceased. Relatives, usually female relatives, had to clean and purify the body to prepare it for burial and the house too had to be cleansed from the pollution brought by death.[73] A vigil was held over the body until the funeral service when mass was said over it. However, obligations to the dead did not end with the burial of the body. Ceremonies marked important phases in the process of transition as the deceased individual moved from the world of the living to the world of the dead. On the third, ninth, and fortieth day after burial and every year for five years a service was held on the anniversary of the death. Georgirenes, the archbishop of Samos, reported that a ceremony also occurred at the end of three months, six months, nine months, and annually thereafter.[74] The ceremonies immediately following the death were thought to be mirrored by the process of decay of the body. On the third day the face dissolved, on the ninth the break down of the body began and only the heart remained, and on the fortieth the process of decay was completed as the heart dissolved as well. It was this final dissolution of the heart, as we have seen above, that was vital for salvation. The physical dissolution of the body was mirrored by the progress of the soul. Here, the popular view differed somewhat from the ecclesiastical perspective, which insisted that the soul departed immediately after death. In the popular view, the soul remained with

[71] Ibid., p. 219.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 151–54.
[74] Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 49.

the body until three days after death. On the third day it left the body accompanied by its guardian angels. On the ninth day it had to pass through the toll gates, where it had to account for its actions during life and on the fortieth day it approached the throne of God and was assigned a place to wait in until Judgement Day.[75] Through their participation in the commemoration, family and friends played a role in the journey that the soul and body were undergoing and the formal ecclesiastical rites had their corollary in the family celebrations. As well as these set days for remembrance, the women of the family tended to the grave regularly, lighting candles and often leaving food or drink.

Indeed, the participation of family and community was essential to the progress of the soul. Normally, the processes of liturgical, psychical and physical separation followed the same pattern. With the *vrykolakas*, however, something had gone wrong. Although Orthodoxy emphasised the community of the living and the dead, it acknowledged that a separation had occurred. The person left his family and community, the soul left the body, the body lost its form and decayed. With the *vrykolakas* this separation between life and death had not been completed. Reversing the usual processes in a false resurrection, the deceased had returned from the dead and existed as an anomaly in the world of the living. The *vrykolakas* was certainly identifiable as the dead individual and continued to participate in the relationship with family and community, but the relationship had changed. It was now hostile and threatening to the living, except in the exceptional case where the cobbler continued to live with his wife and family as before. Even here, however, where the *vrykolakas* posed no obvious danger to society, the community perceived it as a threat and destroyed it.[76]

In most of the deaths which resulted in *vrykolakes*, the family was unable or unwilling to carry out the required rituals which were due to the deceased immediately after death had occurred.[77] The murdered

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[75] Krumbacher, *Studien*, pp. 348–49. Note the symmetry between the formation of the body and the entrance of the soul before birth on the one hand and the dissolution of the body and departure of the soul after death on the other. See the discussion of birth in chapter 5 pp. 124–26, 124 n. 75 above.

[76] See du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire', 232–35 on the concept of 'reversal' in the formation of the Greek vampire.

[77] Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 124–25; du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire', p. 221 argues

man lay in the field for several days before being buried. The merchant had to be transported home before the rites could be carried out. For those who died during the plague, with the volume of deaths occurring, it is unlikely that individuals would have received the care and attention due to them. Those who were cursed were doubly unfortunate. Cursing used the terminology of binding and knotting, which had the effect of preventing or hindering normal processes. It bound the deceased to this world, preventing him/her from passing to the next. In addition, the imprecation expelled the cursed person from the community, and in more serious cases from his/her family. Therefore there might be no one who would carry out the burial rites after death.

The importance given to burial customs would suggest that all who died without receiving the appropriate care would become *vrykolakes*. Soldiers killed on the battlefield should have been prime candidates for becoming *vrykolakes* because they died far from family and community who would have guarded the body and performed the customary observances. Yet Pashley was informed by the people of Crete that those killed in war never became *vrykolakes*.[78] Nevertheless, the treatment by a canon that aimed to disprove the existence of the *vrykolakas*, paradoxically reinforced the relationship between the lack of burial rites and the creation of the revenant. Those most likely to become *vrykolakes*, it argued, were those whose burial rites had been neglected. Once again the paradigmatic case was that of soldiers who had died on the battlefield far from home. If the devil ever possessed dead bodies he would choose these because they were neither guarded nor buried with holy services. However, soldiers never became *vrykolakes* and the author therefore concluded that the *vrykolakas* did not exist.[79] In the course of his argument against this revenant he revealed the perceived connection between the failure to perform the appropriate ceremonies and the creation of the *vrykolakas*, emphasising the importance of the fulfilment of obligations to the dead by church and the family.

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that there is a relationship between the creation of the vampire, the cyclical notion of life and death, and the necessity of anti-clockwise movement around the corpse. If the direction of the circle is reversed, the blood flows back into the corpse, and the deceased returns to life as a *vrykolakas*.

[78] Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 222.

[79] Lambros, 'Μάρκου Μοναχοῦ', 344; Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, p. 69.

In the case of Anapliotis, his reappearance seems to relate not to the failure to perform burial rites, but to the neglect of a different kind of obligation. In fact, Father Richard believed that he was not a *vrykolakas* at all. Anapliotis had returned, Richard explained, because his wife had not fulfilled her promise to provide restitution to those he had wronged during his lifetime, but instead had used her own judgement to distribute the money in alms. Restitution had not been made and so he could not rest in peace. He returned to remind her of her unfulfilled and thus continuing obligations to him. Richard obviously interpreted this in terms of Catholic theology: Anapliotis' debts, moral and financial, had not been discharged on earth and therefore he could not continue to heaven. The Orthodox priests, however, were insistent that he was a *vrykolakas*. This case, like others discussed above, can be understood in terms of the failure of the family to fulfil their obligations to the deceased, rather than the failure of the deceased to clear his financial and spiritual debts while he was still alive. It was essential that all the obligations were fulfilled so that the ties between living and dead, family and individual, body and soul, would dissolve. When they remained unfulfilled the body remained tied to the world. Father Richard has a great deal of sympathy for Iannetis, declaring, "Happy is he who does not place on others the responsibility for his salvation."[80] However, in the popular Orthodox view of the progression of the soul, the individual must rely on the community. The relationship between the individual and the community is absolutely essential for progress into the other world.

From a consideration of the *nomokanones* and the evidence provided by travellers, some idea of the lay understanding of the *vrykolakas* can be obtained. It differed from the ecclesiastical perspective over the creation, nature and destruction of the *vrykolakas*. The church placed the *vrykolakas* within a Christian framework, which limited the power of the devil: the *vrykolakas* was a body possessed by the devil; the devil could only enter the body because of the community's disregard of God's law; the actions of the devil were always limited by the power of God and he could be expelled from the corpse by the clergy, God's representatives on earth. The soul could not remain

[80] Richard, *Relation*, p. 218.

inside the body and the corpse did not retain any characteristics of the living individual. In the lay understanding, the devil was allowed a much freer reign. He reanimated the whole of the dead person, who retained his/her personality and social links and therefore his/her soul. The devil was also able to resist the exorcism of the church and in some cases only disappeared when the body was completely destroyed.

In both the ecclesiastical and popular beliefs surrounding the *vrykolakas*, the community was accorded an important role but the emphasis was different. For the church, it was the impiety of the community which created the *vrykolakas*, that is, the disruption of the relationship between the community and God. In the popular belief, the *vrykolakas* was related above all to relationships within the human community, in particular, the obligations of the living to the dead, which, if they were not properly fulfilled, prevented the deceased from passing to the next world, causing him instead to return to the world of the living. The return of the dead and the failure of the ties between the community and the individual to dissolve, indicated by the failure of the body to dissolve, threatened the survival of the community. This is why the community had to destroy Alexander the cobbler, even though he was living quietly with his wife, without disturbing the daily life of the community. Ultimately, the church and faithful differed in their priorities when dealing with the *vrykolakas*. The church was most concerned about the afterlife of the individual, the laity with the survival of the community. Above all else the church strove to prevent the burning of the body, which removed all hope of eternal life for the deceased. Occasionally, to ensure the future of the community, the laity sacrificed the eternal life of the individual.

The discussion above has revealed the differences between the lay and ecclesiastical approaches to the *vrykolakas* but the hostility of the church to the *vrykolakas* suggests once again that the creature should be distinguished from the ecclesiastically created revenant. To clarify this issue the beliefs and practices surrounding the *tympaniaios*, and its relationship with the *vrykolakas* must now be considered.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE *TYMPANIAIOS*

The attitude of the official Orthodox church towards the second type of revenant that Allatios discusses was very different from that displayed towards the *vrykolakas*. Whereas the church outlawed the *vrykolakas*, the *tympaniaios* was an ecclesiastical creation, the consequence of excommunication, the ecclesiastical punishment for the transgression of sins which was underpinned by the authority of God. During the Ottoman period, the church assumed increasing responsibility for the earthly consequences of the transgressions of the faithful and the sanction of excommunication was employed in the administration of earthly justice to a much greater extent than before. This chapter sets the *tympaniaios* in the context of these developments and asks what effect they had on the relationship between the two types of revenant before returning to consider Allatios' understanding of the *tympaniaios* and *vrykolakas*.

The Greek sources which refer to the *tympaniaios* come out of an ecclesiastical context. Although the authors were not necessarily ordained, they were all deeply concerned with the state and government of the Orthodox church. Many of Allatios' extracts come from the *Nomokanon* of Malaxos, which was one of the most important ecclesiastical legal texts of the early modern period and is attributed to the sixteenth-century notary of the same name. The *Historia politica Constantinopoleos* and the *Historia patriarchica Constantinopoleos*, from which many of the other examples of the *tympaniaios* were drawn, are also attributed to Malaxos, but it has been suggested that he was the copyist rather than the author. Christophoros Angelos was equally concerned about the state of the church and this is the subject of his *Enchiridium*. Allatios also recorded an oral report on the phenomenon from his contemporary, the bishop Athanasios of Imbros.[1] Thus the higher clergy held and acted upon beliefs about the *tympaniaios* and there was a wide acceptance of these beliefs at official

[1] Allatios, *De opin.* XV, p. 151.

level. Many of the extracts Allatios used also cast ecclesiastical figures in the role of the revenant, but the condition of the *tympaniaios* was not confined to the clerical elite; nor were the clergy the only ones to interpret an undecomposed body in this way.[2] Bodies of lay folk were also discovered undissolved and their families related this condition to their excommunication. Rycaut repeated an account given to him by a 'Candiot *Kaloir*':

> the friends of the deceased, being willing and desirous that the Corps should rest in peace, and some ease given to the departed Soul, obtained a Reprieve from the Clergy, and hopes (sic), that for a sum of Money, (they being persons of a competent Estate) a Release might be purchased from this Excommunication under the hand of the Patriarch . . . Letters thereupon [were] sent to Constantinople, with this direction, That in case the Patriarch should condescend to take off the Excommunication, that the day, hour and minute that he signed the Remission should be inserted in the Date.[3]

The liturgy was duly performed, prayers were said and the body suddenly started to disintegrate:

> The hour and the minute of this dissolution was immediately noted and precisely observed, which being compared with the Date of the Patriarchs (sic) release, when it was signed at Constantinople, it was found exactly to agree with that moment in which the Body returned to Ashes.[4]

Rycaut's account confirms how real the sanction of excommunication and its effects were to the laity, and also reveals the central role of absolution in the dissolution of the body.

In the case of the *tympaniaios*, it was the excommunication of the body that prevented it from decaying. Ioannikos, patriarch of Constantinople (1522–45), died bound by anathema and was later discovered "swollen like a drum [lit. *tympaniaios*]."[5] Similarly, Arsenios, bishop of Monemvasia, died under excommunication without performing penance and, when his body was found, it was swollen and black.[6] Retardation of the natural processes of decay was one of the delib-

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[2] Ibid., XVI, p. 152; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, pp. 149; 157–58.
[3] Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 280–81.
[4] Ibid., p. 282.
[5] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, pp. 157–58
[6] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 149.

erate consequences of the excommunication rite in its seventeenth-century form, which commanded: let him remain "undissolvable after death in this World, and in the other which is to come".[7]

As in the case of the *vrykolakas*, there was a connection between the state of the body and the state of the soul. The preservation of the body was indicative of the separation from God after death, for dissolution was essential for resurrection and forgiveness on the Last Day. According to the Orthodox Canon for the Dead:

> All those whose bodies are dissolved into the four elements, do thou refashion and raise up at thy coming, forgiving them all their offences committed in knowledge or in ignorance.[8]

Those who had not dissolved by Judgement Day, that is, those who had not been loosed, would not be forgiven; nor would they be resurrected. The earthly body, stained and damaged by sin, was not fit to enter heaven. It had to decay and disintegrate so that a new, heavenly body could be fashioned on Judgement Day. Of course, this process was not necessary for those who had lived lives unsullied by sin. Saints' bodies did not decompose because they had no need to do so. Their bodies were perfect and so were already prepared for the Kingdom of Heaven.[9] The bodies of saints did not have the terrible appearance of the *tympaniaios* because they had acquired their heavenly form on earth. Despite this, many western commentators found the existence of both good and evil preserved bodies contradictory. The Sieur du Mont, who travelled through the Ottoman Empire in the late seventeenth century, puzzled over why the Greeks always prayed for undissolved bodies whereas the Italians venerated them as saints.[10] Allatios also considered this problem but concluded that to the Orthodox the matter was clear: saints looked, smelled, and behaved like saints, *tympaniaioi* like *tympaniaioi*.[11]

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[7] Angelos, *Enchiridium*, p. 521; translation from Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 274–75.

[8] Eastern Orthodox Church, 'Canon', 105.

[9] P. Fedwick, 'Death and Dying in Byzantine Liturgical Traditions', *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976), 159, explains that bodies that had become corrupted by sin had to be destroyed and refashioned before the final bodily resurrection; Allatios, *De opin.* XVIII, p. 157.

[10] Du Mont, *New Voyage*, p. 295; see also the comments of Manuel Kalekas, *Adversos Graecos*, *PG* 152, col. 211 quoted in Allatios, *De opin.* XVIII, p. 158.

[11] Allatios, *De opin.* XVII, p. 157.

Whereas saints' bodies were not preserved through any external force or authority but as a consequence of their own piety, the *tympaniaios* remained undecayed because of the bishop's power to bind and loose. Bishops had been given the power to bind and loose by Christ. Binding and loosing refers to the power of casting out from the church through excommunication and of receiving back into the church through absolution and forgiveness. In the Gospels Christ said to his Apostles, "Whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven."[12] Excommunication therefore affected the progress of the soul after death. After death a bound soul was literally bound to the body. It could not depart to be with God. It was tied to the world and to the body through its sins. Equally, the body could not disintegrate while the soul remained bound to it, as the soul was eternal and immaterial. The interrelation between the corporeal and spiritual is a characteristic of Byzantine theology. In life the soul and body were an inseparable unit, and whatever was done to the soul was reflected in the body and vice versa. Thus in binding the soul, the body was also bound and failed to dissolve.

For the average mortal, the period during which the soul left the body was a fraught one but essential for salvation. The soul was believed to be reluctant to leave the body and its home environment. Even after the soul had separated from the body, for forty days it lingered around familiar people and places and in many areas the windows were left open so it could come and go as it pleased. The separation from the world was a painful one for all involved. The Greek term for the departure of the soul is '*psychorrageo*' and it indicates the struggle of the soul at the moment of departing from the body. The Orthodox marked this difficult and dangerous passage with a special service, called variously 'Order for letting the soul break loose', 'Office of the soul standing trial',[13] and 'Office at the parting of the soul from the body'.[14] In this rite the congregation helped the soul on its way through its prayers. Once again, as in the case of the *vrykolakas*, the relationship between the living and the

[12] Matthew 16: 19–20.

[13] Fedwick, 'Death', 153: 'standing trial' points to the agony of the soul rather than to a moment of judgement.

[14] For the text of this service, see Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 360–67.

dead, expressed through funeral rites, aided the separation of the soul and body.

In the case of the *tympaniaios*, the soul and the body, bound together by excommunication, were unable to achieve this separation. Denoting the failure to achieve forgiveness and peace in Christ, the undissolved body was a source of great terror.[15] The bishop of Monemvasia was so black and swollen like a drum "that all who saw it [him] were afraid and trembled".[16] In a second passage Malaxos gave another reason for this fear:

> For just as their bodies are held fast and not consumed by the earth, so their souls are also bound by the shackles of the devil and are punished for being corrupt. When, however, the body receives forgiveness, after being set free from the bond of execration, with God's good help, the soul is also set free from the shackles of the devil and attains eternal life and that light which never knows the evening.[17]

Malaxos' account introduces a further aspect into the creation of a *tympaniaios*. Those whose souls were unable to leave were open to attack from the devil. This argument, based on the affinity which was supposed to exist between things of like nature, was often put forward as an explanation of all kinds of phenomena. An early example appears in the text of the mystical author, Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite. He argued that the Lord pours holy fragrances into the minds of his worshippers in proportion to their affinity with the divinity.[18] Using the same logic, the author of a *nomokanon* states that pagans were sometimes infused with the spirit of the python, an animal closely associated with diabolic forces, because of their affinity with the devil.[19] Good was attracted to good and evil to evil; the devil was attracted to the excommunicated soul because of its stains. In addition, the soul had been cast out of the church by means of excommunication and no longer enjoyed its full protection, making it easier for the devil to attack.

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[15] Panagiotis Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς. Ἡ προσαρμογὴ μιᾶς ποινῆς στὶς ἀναγκαιότητες τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας* (Athens, 1997), p. 288.

[16] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 152; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 149.

[17] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 150; Malaxos, *Historia politica*, pp. 48–50. Also quoted in Allatios, *De Purg.*, p. 38.

[18] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 125; Pseudo Dionysios, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* in *Corpus Dionysiacum*, eds. Günter Heil, Adolf Martin Ritter and Beate Suchler (Berlin, 1990), vol. 2, 4.4, p. 99.

[19] Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, p. 69.

In other sources, the devil did not enter the soul through his own volition alone, but with the permission of God, almost through his direction:

> Those who truly are found excommunicated, that is, those whose bodies remain undissolved and intact, need absolution to set them free from the bonds of excommunication. For just as the body is found bound on earth, so also his soul is bound and is punished through the power of the devil. When the body has been absolved and loosed from excommunication, God so willing, his soul is set free from the shackles of the devil and may partake of eternal life.[20]

God used the devil to punish souls who could not escape their bodies after death. This may shed light on the paragraph concerning Ioannikos, patriarch of Constantinople, who was given "the punishments that he merited".[21] At first sight these 'punishments' appear to refer to the act of excommunication itself, but, taken in conjunction with the passage above that is by the same author, it is rather a consequence of the excommunicated state. Arsenios, like Ioannikos, died excommunicated and it is clear that his fate after death was directly related to his sin as "consumed by the bitterness of his mind, he died under excommunication without performing penance."[22] He had not atoned for his sins, and this was why the excommunication had not been lifted before he died. Thus God was using the devil to punish after death those who failed to atone for their sins during life.

As well as indicating the punishment which the deceased was undergoing, the failure of the body to dissolve drew the attention of the community to the perilous state of his/her soul. It urged them to procure an absolution for the soul in torment and to offer intercession for it. The characteristic appearance of the body advertised its plight and enabled it to obtain the required assistance. In this sense, the blackened body could be seen as a positive sign: on account of it the deceased would receive the necessary absolution and then be sure of heaven. In contrast, those who had been excommunicated and were found dissolved had no hope of salvation:

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[20] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 150; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 73, p. 114.
[21] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, pp. 157–58.
[22] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 149.

> He who is justly and rationally and lawfully excommunicated by his bishop and after death is discovered dissolved, has no hope of salvation; not because he has transgressed the divine laws, but because he omitted to repent and failed to perform penance and to obtain forgiveness of his sins from the bishop by whom he had been excommunicated. For this reason he is found dissolved: he no longer has a hope of obtaining pardon because he is already participating in never-ending punishment.[23]

This soul had no second chance to obtain salvation. Following death, God pronounced judgement and the soul was sent straight to hell. In fact, in both cases God was seen to be promulgating a partial judgement on the soul immediately after death. Either the soul was sinful but capable of entering heaven after a period of punishment through the instrument of the devil and an absolution from the church, or it was condemned to everlasting damnation.

Although in many ways the *tympaniaios* was woven into Orthodox beliefs, here the phenomenon came into conflict with the Byzantine tradition. It does not fit with the evidence provided by the Canon for the Dead. There, all those who had disintegrated were assumed to have received forgiveness, whereas in the example above, disintegration had the opposite meaning in the particular case of an excommunicated body. Rather than interpreting the dissolution as an example of God's ability to forgive sinners who repented, even though this repentance may not have been made obvious through penance, it was seen as an instant condemnation. Dissolution had become a sign that God had passed judgement and the soul had achieved its final resting-place.

The Tympaniaios *and the Doctrine of Purgatory*

The accounts discussed above suggest that there were three places where the soul could be located after death: heaven, hell, and on earth but trapped within the body. This schema bears a resemblance to the western doctrine, which posited the existence of a third place, purgatory, located between heaven and hell where the soul waited for the Last Judgement and suffered temporarily for sins not atoned

[23] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 150; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 73, p. 114.

for during life. This doctrine required God to make a partial judgement on the fate of the soul immediately after death: the blessed, who had lived a blameless life, went straight to heaven; those he condemned went directly to hell; the middling sort, who had sinned but repented and could redeem themselves through penance, were interred in the third place, purgatory, midway between heaven and hell.[24] The doctrine of purgatory was formally accepted by the western church in the twelfth century and met a popular need. Purgatory arose from, and was made necessary by, the particular relationship between sin and penance which occurred in western theology. In order to obtain forgiveness, the sinner not only had to repent, but also had to perform sufficient penance to satisfy the 'debt' incurred as a result of his/her sin. Before the twelfth century, those who had overlooked sins during life, or who had not performed strict enough penance, risked eternal suffering in hell, as they had failed to perform satisfaction for their debt to God. With the advent of purgatory, sinners could complete the required penance in the third place, before proceeding to heaven.

The *tympaniaios* also constituted punishment of sinners, for only the excommunicated were afflicted. Their suffering began immediately after death when the demon entered the soul, but had a limited duration, ceasing on absolution. Under this interpretation, the *tympaniaios* appears to fill the role of an Orthodox purgatory. Allatios noted the similarity between purgatory and the Greek revenant. His interpretation is provided in a commentary on the *vrykolakas* rather than the *tympaniaios*, but this is not a problem as it merely reveals once again his conflation of the two kinds of revenant.[25] "Very often", he wrote, "the souls of the dead are thrown into a place hateful to them, like a prison, for the purpose of enduring torments prescribed by God."[26] This happened to those who had 'held God in contempt' during their lives.[27] These terms were characteristic of a description of purgatory.[28] Allatios' understanding of the *tympaniaios* was also consistent with the satisfactory notion of penance on which purgatory depended. He wrote that the people who became *tympaniaioi* were those who:

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[24] Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (London, 1984), pp. 224; 322–23.
[25] See chapter 7 above pp. 174–77.
[26] Allatios, *De opin.* XIII, p. 145.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 319.

> bishops and priests of the Christian people lawfully expel from the community of the faithful because of any sin committed, [and] who, while they are alive did not receive correction to purify them of that fault. . . . [These people] do not dissolve into the ground but remain inflated like a drum [lit: *tympaniaios*].[29]

With the *tympaniaios*, the body, like purgatory, was a place where souls were imprisoned and punished for the sins for which they had not atoned during life.

This understanding of the *tympaniaios* appears again in Allatios' book on purgatory, *De utriusque ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua in dogmate de Purgatorio consensione* (1655). He considered that the existence of the *tympaniaios* and the remission of sins after death, which the undissolved body implied, proved that the Greeks did have purgatory. He argued that there had to be another place between heaven and hell, because in hell there would be no redemption and in heaven no punishment; since the Greeks did have punishment of sins after death, they also must have purgatory.[30] Again in chapter XVII of the *De opinationibus* he criticised inconsistencies in the Greek position resulting from their denial of purgatory. Since the Greeks held that actions of the living aided the dead, they either had to admit the existence of purgatory or allow the unacceptable view that these suffering souls were released from hell.[31] The *tympaniaios* could not completely mirror purgatory, however, for it did not constitute a separate third place. Instead, the earth became the transitional location. The earth, like purgatory, was a midway point situated between heaven and hell, a place of temporary suffering where good and evil were both active. Life on earth shared many characteristics with purgatory, but it was a transitional world for the living, not for the dead. As there was no purgatory or separate third place in Orthodox Christianity, for Allatios the earth became the transitional place for the dead as well. This was also the case in the West before purgatory was introduced. After the twelfth century, with the preaching of the purgatorial doctrine, spirits largely disappeared as souls were now confined within the prison of purgatory, which also acted as a waiting room for souls before they received their final resting places at the time of the Last Judgement. Although spirits began to

[29] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 154; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 118.
[30] Allatios, *De Purg.*, pp. 41–42.
[31] Allatios, *De opin.* XVII, p. 157.

reappear again in the seventeenth century, their nature had changed. They now came to warn about the perils of purgatory and provide an insight into life after death.[32]

Sin and the Afterlife: the Orthodox Perspective

The Orthodox never adopted the doctrine of purgatory. When the matter was first raised at an official level during the Council of Lyons in 1274, it proved a stumbling block to the discussion over the union of churches and the final account of the council made no mention of purgatory as a third place or as containing fire.[33] The Council of Florence/Ferrara, where union was once again on the agenda, did not arrive at a new formulation and the doctrine of purgatory continued to be seen as a point of difference between the two churches.[34] The statement of Mark of Ephesos at the latter council confirmed that the Greeks did not believe in a third place between heaven and hell, but that they did believe in punishment after death and that prayers of the living could assist the dead. However, these councils revealed that among the Greek theologians there was no clear, agreed view on what happened to souls immediately after death.[35] At the Council of Florence/Ferrara, the churchman Bessarion declined to discuss the matter on the grounds that he had nothing to say on it, and not all accepted the arguments put forward by Mark of Ephesos.[36] Even though most concurred that souls did not achieve their final resting place before the Last Judgement and that there were three different states of souls, there was no consensus on whether these souls existed together or in two or three different places after death.[37]

Many of the ideas contained in the doctrine of purgatory sat oddly with the Byzantine approach to the afterlife. It was difficult for the Orthodox to come to a final conclusion on the subject given the apophatic nature of their theology. Neither the Gospels nor the

[32] Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 294.
[33] Robert Ombres, *The Theology of Purgatory* (Butler, Wisconsin, 1978), p. 44.
[34] Ibid., p. 45.
[35] J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 119–20.
[36] Ibid., pp. 120–21.
[37] Ware, *Argenti*, p. 144.

Church Fathers made any reference to a third place. Therefore mankind had no information on the whereabouts of the soul after death and should not discuss the unknowable.[38] This meant that in Orthodox theology there was no clear direction on the fate of souls immediately after death, although most theologians denied that there was a third place where punishment was suffered temporarily.

Despite the absence of the doctrine of purgatory in Orthodoxy, other beliefs about the progress of the soul in the afterlife did exist: it had to pass through toll gates where it underwent ordeals before arriving at a resting place, either in the 'chasm of Hades' or in the 'bosom of Abraham', to await the Final Judgement. These were not separate places like purgatory, but were closely associated with heaven or hell. Nor was there a stress on atonement in the western sense: the emphasis fell on confession and repentance rather than providing satisfaction for sins. For restoration to God, only true contrition and repentance were necessary.[39]

The 'Dream of Gregory' contained in the tenth-century *Life* of Basil the Younger written by Gregory of Thrace illustrates the progress of the soul.[40] After death souls had to pass through a number of toll gates where they were interrogated by angels and devils about their sins. In Gregory's dream the nun Theodora easily passed through gates where she was interrogated about sins she had confessed, for these could no longer be held against her.[41] The difficulty came when she was asked about sins she had omitted to confess. However, here Theodora was helped on her way by a bag of gold coins from her spiritual father who had given it to her guardian angels, saying: "Receive this and with them redeem her when you come to the toll gates of the air, for I by the grace of Christ am rich enough and have enough and to spare for my soul."[42] Just as a bag of gold would

[38] Robert Ombres, 'Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory, 1230–1439', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984), 9; Gill, *Council of Florence*, p. 121.

[39] George Every, 'Toll Gates on the Air Way', *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976), 149.

[40] This occurs in the 'Life of St Basil the Younger', *Acta Sanctorum Martii iii* (Paris, 1668), pp. 667–81 (Latin); 22–39 (Greek). A fuller version appears in *Sbornik otdeleniia russkago iazyka i slovesnosti*, vol. XLVI, Academia scientarum imperialis, St Petersburg, 1890, pp. 10–37 in no. 6 at the end of the volume. For a discussion of this text see Every, 'Toll Gates', 139–51.

[41] Every, 'Toll Gates', 147.

[42] Ibid., 145–46.

ease the passage of a worldly traveller through customs, so it would aid the journey of the soul. The role of the spiritual father was vital in the salvation of souls, as he could take on the burden of the sins of his spiritual son or daughter and smooth their path after death with his own virtue.

The role of the spiritual father illustrated here builds on the comments in the 'Order for Confession and Penance' of Pseudo John the Faster, which became the basis for future *nomokanones*. In this text the confessor urged the sinner to tell him of his sins.[43] By confessing his sins now, he would avoid difficulties in the afterlife, not only because of his true repentance, but also because of the responsibility that the confessor assumed for what had been confessed. The origin of this idea can be seen in the works of the sixth-century monk, John Klimakos, where "someone with a totally clear conscience in the matter of being obedient to his spiritual father waits each day for death . . . and he is unafraid, knowing with certainty that when it is time to go, not he but his spiritual director will be called to render an account."[44] This approach passed into the Byzantine tradition and was emphasised by St Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) in his works on the relationship between the sinner and confessor.[45] Thus the ordinary penitent could be aided by his spiritual father, just as Theodora was aided by hers. The emphasis was on repentance and spiritual growth rather than the performance of penance. If the soul passed through all the toll gates, it rested in the lower reaches of heaven, or 'Abraham's bosom', until the Last Judgement Day. There the soul was able to complete its repentance, not penance, and continue to grow spiritually. There was no sense of punishment after death for those sins that had been repented and this distinguished the Byzantine view of the fate of the middling souls from that expressed in western Purgatory. Purgatory was specifically for those who had repented of, but not atoned sufficiently for, their sins. Instead, in the 'Dream of Gregory', the soul resting in 'Abraham's bosom' was able to move towards a greater under-

[43] Pseudo John the Faster, *Ordo*, col. 1892.

[44] John Klimakos, *The Ladder of Divine* Ascent, trans. Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell (London, 1982), pp. 106–107.

[45] H.J.M. Turner, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Spiritual Fatherhood* (Leiden, 1990), p. 125.

standing of God after death under the guidance of the spiritual father.[46]

The *tympaniaios* also encapsulated a view of the soul after death, but it was a very different vision. It was exclusively concerned with sinners who had not atoned after excommunication, whereas the 'Dream of Gregory' followed the journey of an ordinary man, and reveals the assistance provided by his spiritual father, who, notably, was not a member of the secular church but a monk. Although it does contain a warning, the 'Dream of Gregory' was in essence hopeful: it was possible to achieve a place in heaven, even if you did sin, for your spiritual father would carry you along by his virtue. The view represented by the *tympaniaios* was much bleaker. Sins had to be atoned for; the debt to God and to the church must be paid.

The satisfactory notion of penance that is apparent in Allatios' translations of the extracts relating to the *tympaniaios* was something new in Orthodoxy.[47] In the Byzantine tradition confession and repentance alone were necessary to obtain forgiveness. There was no separation between guilt and debt as there was in the West: once the sinner had repented there was no outstanding debt to be repaid. This was one of the main stumbling blocks to the acceptance of purgatory. At Ferrara and Florence, the theologians could not admit that those who had repented should be punished: in the Catholic notion, purgatory contained those souls who had repented while on earth, but failed to perform the required value of penance and therefore had not wiped the debt. The time in purgatory enabled him/her to do this. The unrepentant went to hell. Moreover, at the beginning of the Ottoman period, there was no Greek word corresponding to the western notion of 'satisfaction'. The Greek term was only developed by Patriarch Gennadios II who translated the Latin word '*satisfactio*' literally into Greek ('*ikanopoiesis*') in his attempt to explain the differences between Orthodox and Catholic doctrines of penance.[48] Even in this case, the Orthodox interpretation of satisfaction was not identical to the Catholic: repentance, contrition and spiritual healing were important, rather than penance and the payment of debt.[49]

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[46] Meyendorff, *Theology*, pp. 220–21.
[47] Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 289.
[48] Every, 'Toll Gates', 137.
[49] Gennadios II, Patriarch of Constantinople, 'État des ames intermédiaires' in

The Catholic understanding of the relationship between sin and the afterlife influenced Allatios' understanding and, consequently, his translation of the Greek excerpts in the *De opinationibus*. He placed the emphasis on the performance of penance. This can be seen in his Latin translation of the account of the fate of Bishop Arsenios of Monemvasia. His translation states that Arsenios died under the ban of the church '*nulla poenitenita acta*' i.e. 'without performing penance'. His fate was the consequence of failing to perform penance. The Greek text has a different emphasis and describes the sinner as 'ἀμετανόητος' or 'unrepentant'.[50] Again, in another passage Allatios translated "νὰ μὴν ἐπιστραφῇ, νὰ ἔλθῃ εἰς μετάνοιαν" i.e. "not turning and coming to repentance" with "*sed ne, conversus et poenitentiam agens*" i.e. "not turning and performing penance".[51] His paraphrase of the passage from the *Historia politica Constantinopoleos* is very revealing. He reported that a body had been preserved as a *tympaniaios* because the sinner "omitted to repent and failed to perform penance"; that is "*non emendantur ut expientur ab illo lapsu*".[52] The Greek, however, merely describes the sinner as excommunicated and requiring the forgiveness of the community. Allatios interpreted the idea of forgiveness in terms of the western satisfaction. Through Allatios' translations, the Greek stress on repentance was transformed into a Latin emphasis on penance, bringing the *tympaniaios* closer to the Catholic conception of purgatory.

Developments Affecting the Orthodox Interpretation of the Tympaniaios

Allatios' interpretation of the *tympaniaios* in terms of purgatory was not purely a consequence of his Catholicism. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Greek theological world was in turmoil over the issue of purgatory. A plethora of different opinions existed on the subject, with many protagonists changing sides in the debate.

Louis Petit, X.A. Sideridas, Martin Jugie (eds.), *Oeuvres completes de Georges Scholarios* (Paris, 1928), vol. 1 p. 536; Every, 'Toll Gates', 139.

[50] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 153. Latin: lines 21–22; Greek: line 19; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 149.

[51] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, Latin: p. 150, line 18; Greek: p. 149, line 31; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 73, p. 113–14.

[52] Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 154, line 4. For the Greek see Malaxos, *Historia politica*, pp. 48–49.

Meletios Pigas, patriarch of Constantinople (1597–98), totally rejected the idea of satisfactory penance. God's forgiveness was complete and once the sinner was truly repentant no penance was required by God. Christ's sacrifice was for the sins of all, and to require additional penance for redemption was to slight his suffering.[53] It follows that for Pigas there was no purgatory, but he did accept the existence of the 'bosom of Abraham' and the 'chasm of Hades', and as such was in agreement with the earlier 'Dream of Gregory'.[54] Although Pigas continued in the Byzantine tradition, others were closer to the Catholic doctrine. At this end of the scale is the first confession of Peter of Moghila, metropolitan of Kiev, in which he affirmed the particular judgement following death and the existence of a third place between heaven and hell.[55] The eastern church councils were equally indecisive on the issue. In 1642 the Council of Jassy accepted the revised version of Moghila's confession of faith, which rejected a particular judgement after death. His confession accepted that a soul was sometimes released from hell, but not that this occurred as a consequence of expiatory punishment.[56] In contrast, the Council of Jerusalem (1672), one of the most important of the seventeenth-century councils, upheld the doctrine of purgatory and the expiatory nature of the penances there performed following the first confession of Dositheos, patriarch of Jerusalem.[57] Thus it maintained the separation which existed in the Catholic scheme between the guilt that was absolved through repentance and the debt that was atoned for through penance. The Council of Constantinople half a century later rejected the existence of a third place, but accepted that there were areas in the lower reaches of heaven, and upper strata of hell where satisfaction could be performed.[58]

These discussions over the idea of purgatory demonstrate the powerful influence of Catholic doctrine during this period. The Catholic approach came on more than one front. After the fall of Constantinople, increasing numbers of Orthodox clergy were forced to attend

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[53] Ware, *Argenti*, p. 150.
[54] Ibid., p. 143.
[55] Martin Jugie (ed.), *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 4, *Theologiae Dogmaticae Graeco-Russorum Expositio* (Paris, 1931), p. 20; Ware, *Argenti*, p. 143.
[56] Moghila, *Confession*, q. 64, p. 54; Ware, *Argenti*, p. 150.
[57] Dositheos, *Synod*, Decree XVIII, p. 150. Ware, *Argenti*, p. 151.
[58] Ware, *Argenti*, p. 146.

the Catholic colleges of Rome and Venice because of the absence of a Greek institution of higher education. Most colleges taught Catholic dogma and the Orthodox college was greatly over-subscribed. As a consequence, most were instructed in Catholic rather than Orthodox doctrine, and unsurprisingly many who returned to the East were influenced by their experience and showed traces of their Catholic training in their thinking. The increased contact with Catholicism, both in the schools and through the Catholic missionary activity, forced Orthodox theologians to examine their position on the various points of difference between the two churches. These differences were well known and many treatises appeared on the subject. The debate which had long existed between Orthodoxy and Catholicism was heightened by the Reformation and the entrance into the fray of the reformed churches. After the Council of Trent, Luther moved increasingly further away from the doctrine of purgatory, finally rejecting it altogether, and his followers maintained his later position.[59] Both Protestant and Catholic churches were interested in the doctrine of the Greeks, which seemed neither to affirm nor deny purgatory absolutely, allowing the efficacy of intercessionary prayers for the dead, while rejecting a particular judgement and the existence of a third place. The support of the Greeks would have been a great prize in the battle between the two western churches. Although neither western church particularly admired the doctrines of the Orthodox church, it was considered to be the oldest, and in some ways the closest to the early church. As such it would have brought with it great moral authority, and added weight to the victor's claims of following in the footsteps of the early church.

At a time when Catholic influence was so strong, it is not surprising that Allatios was not alone in suggesting an understanding of the *tympaniaios* in terms of punishment after death. There were also tensions in the Orthodox *nomokanones* between two interpretations of the spiritual state of those who became *tympaniaioi*. One canon stated that those who were excommunicated but found dissolved after death were the unrepentant who did not deserve forgiveness.[60] However, Arsenios, bishop of Monemvasia, died unrepentant

[59] Ombres, *Theology of Purgatory*, pp. 46–47; Robert Ombres, 'Images of Healing: the Making of the Traditions Concerning Purgatory', *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976), 137.

[60] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 150; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 73 pp. 113–14.

(ἀμετανόητος) and his corpse was discovered undecayed. What then was the distinction between the two cases? If unrepentant excommunicates dissolved, those who were found undissolved must have repented but somehow remained unworthy of forgiveness.[61] The implication was that they had repented but failed to perform penance. The period of punishment which occurred after death in the form of the *tympaniaios* then applied specifically to the repentant souls. To allow this interpretation of the *tympaniaios*, beliefs concerning the relation of sin, repentance and penance and the fate of the soul after death must have changed or at least diversified substantially by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Repentance alone no longer assured salvation. This development was eased by the flexible character of the Greek word 'μετάνοια' as within it the ideas of penance and repentance were combined because of their inseparable nature in earlier Orthodox theology.[62]

There are descriptions of the excommunicated body which come from the Byzantine period. In the previous chapter we came across the account attributed to Cassian, which described the excommunication of a bishop who failed to agree with his peers at one of the church councils.[63] However, this does not come from any of the extant works of John Cassian and perhaps is the work of a later author of the same name. Although early writers understood excommunication to assign the living excommunicant to the attacks of the devil and the Church Fathers were concerned with the fate of the dead body after death, they did not analyse these problems in terms of excommunication and its consequences.[64] Even in the twelfth century the issue does not seem to have been a pressing one. The canonist Balsamon did not discuss the problem even though he dealt with the question of who should absolve an excommunicated person. He concluded that, although in theory this could be performed by any bishop, in practice it was advisable to encourage the penitent to seek

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[61] See the discussion of Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 296 where he argues that with these claims the church is attempting to stress the power of excommunication even when it failed to preserve the body.

[62] Ariadni Gerouki, *Les Excommunications à Corfu (XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles): criminalité et attitudes mentales* (Athens, 1998), p. 32.

[63] See chapter 7 p. 175 above.

[64] Theodoretus, *Interpretatio primae epistolae ad Corinthios, PG* 82, cols. 259–62; Lawson, *Folklore*, p. 406; John Chrysostom, *Homilia in Lazarum, PG* 62, cols. 774; 777; Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 289.

absolution from the same man who bound him, to prevent it from becoming too easy to obtain.[65] Balsamon's influence can be seen in many *nomokanones* that give this as a condition for absolution.[66] Sometimes the prescription could have dire effects, and not only on the excommunicated person. Allatios' informant, the bishop of Imbros, related that a certain Bishop Rezepios had excommunicated a sinner, but subsequently converted to Islam. He was persuaded to renounce his conversion in order to absolve the excommunicate. Consequently Rezepios was put to death by the Islamic authorities as an apostate.[67] Even though the question of who should carry out absolution was closely connected to the problem of the *tympaniaios*, Balsamon makes no mention of the undissolved body. This suggests that it was not considered to be a vital part of the official church doctrine during his time. The belief was certainly current by the thirteenth century, for Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–82) was cast out of the Orthodox church for his attempts to bring about union with the Catholic church at the Council of Lyons, and became the most famous Byzantine *tympaniaios*.[68] In the case of Michael Palaiologos and in the account attributed to Cassian the implication is that the individual was unforgiven and unrepentant. There are no cases where the excommunicate dissolves, indicating his instant departure to hell.

The Orthodox Laity and the Catholic Church

Not only was the higher clergy involved in theological debate with Catholic theologians, but the laity was approached by Catholic missionaries. The great missionary orders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries established firm bases on both the mainland and in the islands, founding churches and sometimes schools. At first the relationship between the two churches was good. The local priests on the islands had neither the means nor the education of the missionaries and on the whole welcomed the resources that they brought

[65] Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, vol. 2, p. 27.
[66] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 150; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 73 pp. 113–14.
[67] Allatios, *De opin.* XV, p. 152.
[68] Allatios, *De opin.* XVIII, p. 157. See also Miklosich, *Acta*, vol. 1, pp. 534–25 for a fourteenth-century account of an excommunication.

with them. There were many reports of joint processions and sharing of churches during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries but in the mid-seventeenth century the relationship began to sour as the Orthodox hierarchy gradually realised that many of its members were making private confessions of faith. Despite promulgations of the pope forbidding the practice, missionaries allowed converts to make a private confession of faith and to continue attending the Orthodox liturgy. It is difficult to establish the level of doctrine communicated to the new congregations as missionaries did not require converts to have an understanding of the Catholic position before conversion, and, at any rate the missionaries were instructed to avoid contentious areas of the faith. The converts were treated rather as lapsed Catholics requiring gentle persuasion and encouragement.[69]

Of course, it is also difficult to assess the extent of the lay knowledge of Orthodox doctrine. It is unlikely that the level would have been high, as many of the priests in outlying areas scarcely had any education, but lack of doctrinal knowledge does not imply that church teaching had no influence. Through pastoral work both the Catholic and Orthodox churches could guide the beliefs of the laity without explicitly stating their theological positions. For example, Father Richard tells of one Iannetis Anapliotis, who was afraid that he would become a *vrykolakas* after death. He confessed this fear to one of the Jesuits, who told him to give money to charity, and make restitution for his debts. If he did this, his confessor implied, he would not become a *vrykolakas*.[70] The confessor emphasised the relationship between restitution and salvation, and, conversely, the state of moral debt and suffering.

This example also shows how the position of the Orthodox church as the arbiter of salvation had been challenged by the missionaries. It was to the missionary that Iannetis turned for advice concerning his salvation, not to an Orthodox monk or priest. The Catholic church was seen as an alternative source of supernatural power and guidance, and in some cases a more effective one than the traditional church. Unfortunately Iannetis' actions did not have the desired effect and he returned as a *vrykolakas* after his death. Nevertheless, Richard recorded that Iannetis' cousin,

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[69] Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, pp. 114–15.
[70] Richard, *Relation*, p. 218.

> one of the most important Greeks [of the island], in fear of appearing in this guise after his death wants to be buried in our church, persuaded that the presence of the holy sacrament and the sanctity of the place will deter the demons from approaching his body.[71]

He believed the Catholic church to be more powerful in preventing demonic attack and, by implication, to be more powerful in carrying out the will of God. Orthodox theology, under pressure from Catholic doctrine, unable to explain the fate of the soul after death, came under increasing pressure from the Catholic missionaries. Better educated, trained, and funded, they could appeal to the laity and spread their beliefs through pastoral work.

The Catholic influence on the higher clergy and on the laity affected the Orthodox understanding of penance and repentance, which in turn affected the understanding of the *tympaniaios*. It came to be seen as a form of punishment, which had not been the case before. It may also have affected the lay approach to the undissolved body. However, the direct Catholic influence on Orthodoxy was not the only factor which had an influence on the changing relationship between sin and penance. The situation in the Ottoman Empire, where the Orthodox church was only one faith among many and where it had to play an increasing role in administering justice to the laity, also affected its relationship with the faithful. These issues will be examined in the next section before we return to consider the effect of these changes on the relationship between sin and penance within Orthodoxy.

The Tympaniaios *and the Jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church*

In the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox church faced competition for jurisdiction over Orthodox souls from both Catholicism and Islam. The Orthodox faithful accessed the supernatural power of the Catholic missionaries and the local imam. Many took children to be blessed by the imam as well as having them baptised by the priest. In the case of Islam as in Catholicism, material as well as theological factors played a role in conversion. Muslims were exempt from certain kinds of taxation and social advancement was more open to Muslims

[71] Ibid., p. 217.

than Christians. The new challenges meant that the Orthodox church needed a strong statement of its ability to mediate between God and man. What better than a visual demonstration of the power of keys, God's gift to the church, in the binding and loosing of the body. From being a consequence of excommunication and part of the mediation process between the sinner and God, the *tympaniaios* came to be seen as an explicit statement of Orthodox power. One account was so important in this respect that it was reported by a number of different sources.[72] Hearing about the bloated bodies of the excommunicated, the sultan required the patriarch to find such a corpse and display his power in causing it to dissolve. After puzzling for many days, Patriarch Maximos eventually discovered the corpse of an excommunicated woman. By order of the sultan this corpse was shut up and sealed in the coffin. Then it was brought before the patriarch, who recited the absolution over her in the presence of the sultan:

> Behold, then, a great miracle of God! Behold, the divine mercy and the love which hangs over humankind! "I say that the miracle is great and amazing and occurred at that hour through divine influence."

As soon as the patriarch pronounced the absolution, the body was heard to make a cracking noise, characteristic of the process of dissolution, and all those who were watching "gave thanks to God with tears for producing great and amazing miracles." The patriarch's ability to bring about the dissolution of the body was acclaimed as a miracle, and therefore emphasised the grace conferred upon him by the Lord. The miracle did not only bring credit to him, however, but to the whole Orthodox church. When the coffin was opened in front of the sultan, the body was found to be dissolved and "hearing all this, the sultan was astounded beyond measure and was amazed at such a great miracle. "Indeed the Christian religion", he said, "is true without a doubt."[73] Through such a demonstration of its spiritual power the church strived to prove the truth of its faith.

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[72] For the other texts which include this account see Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 293 n. 2.

[73] The above account is taken from Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, p. 156; Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, pp. 118–24. See also Malaxos, *Historia politica*, pp. 48–50.

The *tympaniaios* was important as a symbol of power, not only of the spiritual authority of the Orthodox church, but also of its temporal authority, for the challenge to its spiritual authority was accompanied by an extension of its worldly power at the outset of the Ottoman period. The structure of the Ottoman state forced the church to assume greater jurisdictional powers over the Orthodox and this led to a change in the relationship between church and congregation. Under the Ottoman system of government, the people were divided up according to their religion and the church was the body through which the Porte governed the Orthodox population.[74] In addition to this political role, the church had a judicial one and was allowed to deal with civil and financial cases between Christians as well as ecclesiastical matters. The ecclesiastical court was not an innovation. By the twelfth century the church had claimed the right to provide asylum for murderers and to judge them in their own courts on the grounds that murder consisted of taking the God-given gift of life.[75] In the years following the Latin conquest of 1204 with the decline of imperial authority, bishops assumed a greater role in legal matters, as revealed in the accounts of the bishops Demetrios Chomatianos (1216/17–36) from Epiros and John Apokaukos (1199/1200–1232) from Macedonia.[76] Again, with the upheaval of civil war during the fourteenth century, the church stepped into the breach. After 1453, the ecclesiastical authorities took on even more responsibility and by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with sacrilege and adultery, they could be called to deal with theft, failure to pay rents, boundary disputes, commercial disputes, debtors, slander, magic, murder and crimes detrimental to public health.[77]

In its decisions the church was guided above all by the ecclesiastical body of law contained in the *Nomokanon* of Malaxos, which is cited by Allatios, and the fourteenth-century *Hexabiblos* of Harmenopoulos.[78]

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[74] Theodore H. Papadopoullos *Studies and Documents Relating to the History of the Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination* (New York, 1952), pp. 7; 9; Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 20.

[75] Ruth Macrides, 'Killing and Asylum and the Law in Byzantium', *Speculum* 63 (1988), 536.

[76] Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 419–25.

[77] For an analysis of such cases in Corfu see Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, passim.

[78] N. Vlachos, 'La Relation des Grecs asservis avec l'état musulman souverain' in *1453–1953. Le 500 ème Anniversaire de la Prise de Constantinople* (L'Hellénisme Contemporain, 2 ème série), (Athens, 1953), p. 140.

However, the church did not have a wide range of sanctions with which to enforce its judgements. Except on rare occasions when it was backed up by the Turkish or Venetian authorities, the church had to rely on the moral sanction of excommunication.[79] The church had always employed excommunication as a sanction against sinners, but already by the thirteenth century excommunication was being used in legal proceedings in addition to, or instead of, the oath.[80] In civil cases the court proceedings did not follow a particular formal procedure and both the evidence and the judgement were covered by oath. The defendant was often asked to take an oath with respect to his innocence, especially if no evidence existed and this oath was bound by a threat of excommunication. Sometimes the whole court was bound under pain of excommunication which would apply to anyone who perjured himself/herself. This sanction was also used to ensure adherence to the judgement. Although the church was able to threaten prison in some cases, it usually fell back on ecclesiastical sanctions. This is illustrated by the involvement of the church in the case of Laskaris, a Greek furrier. The excommunication would come into force should he transgress his agreement with Iasaph Saparta, a Jew. It is important to realise that he was not merely threatened with excommunication. The ceremony had been carried out, but the sanction would only come into force if the agreement was broken.[81]

Relying on the omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence of God, excommunication was a very flexible sanction. Those whose crimes were in the past and who had been found guilty could be excommunicated after the trial. However, this was not the limit of the sanction. Excommunication could also, as in the case above,

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[79] Ibid., 141; Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, p. 66.

[80] Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, p. 34. It has been argued that there were two kinds of excommunication that the church could apply — the great and the little excommunication. The little excommunication did not involve the curse, but was a spiritual remedy, applying a fixed period of repentance before the penitent returned to the fold. It was the great excommunication, which threatened to bind for eternity, that was associated with the creation of the *tympaniaios*. However, from her work on excommunication in Corfu, Ariadni Gerouki has argued that the distinction between the two broke down under the pressure for the church to meet the jurisdictional needs of the faithful and the type of excommunication is only apparent from its effect. P. Gounarides, 'Ὅρκος καὶ ἀφορισμὸς στὰ Βυζαντινὰ δικαστήρια', *Σύμμεικτα* 7 (1987), 48 ff.

[81] Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 154–60.

apply to some hypothetical future event. Laskaris would only be excommunicated if he broke the agreement. This feature meant that excommunication could be appended to legal rulings with general force. In 1701 when Patriarch Kallinikos legislated on excessive dowries, his ruling was followed by a threat of excommunication for those who transgressed.[82] Unlike the earthly penalties attached to legal transgressions, excommunication needed no further court action for the punishment to take effect. Anyone contravening such decrees should consider himself or herself to be excommunicated. Thus it was an eminently practical method of ensuring justice and carrying out legal responsibilities.[83]

Excommunication could also be applied to events in the past where the church was unsure whether or not the defendant had committed the crime. Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios remonstrated with a woman who had set up a brothel outside the patriarchal palace. The woman, "incited by the devil, accused the patriarch . . . of trying to force her into evil deeds." He responded with an excommunication. One day, after he had performed the usual liturgy, he said:

> if those words which the priest's widow had said against him were true, he prayed that she would be pardoned by God for it and be given happiness, and that her body would be dissolved. However, if she had falsely accused him, having made up a most unworthy charge, he would consign her to the will and judgement of the omnipotent God, having banished her from the holy flock of the pious, deprived of forgiveness and [with her body] indissoluble.[84]

The judgement of God was exercised; she died forty days later and her body indeed remained undissolved for many years. In this example the church was, again, using the omniscience of the Lord to exercise judgement.

God's omniscience could extend the power of the church through space as well as time. The sanction of excommunication could stretch to those beyond the worldly arm of the church. However far the excommunicated person ran, he could not escape. A man committed a crime in the Morea and fled far away to the isle of Milos:

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[82] Ibid., 157.

[83] For further accounts of excommunications on Corfu see Gerouki, *Les Excommunications* and for excommunication in other areas see the list of accounts in Gerouki's notes p. 64, n. 28.

[84] For this account see Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, pp. 118–24; Allatios, *De opin.* XVI, pp. 154–55.

> where though he avoided the hand of Justice, yet [he] could not avoid the Sentence of Excommunication, from which he could no more fly, than from the conviction of his own Conscience, or the guilt which ever attended him.[85]

The use of excommunication extended the justice and authority of the church to all regions of earth, as well as to heaven.

Increasingly from the late Byzantine period, earthly justice was pursued by the Lord through the church in a much more active way than before and it was believed to be effective. Other parties would request excommunications to be carried out to restore order. For example, during the seventeenth century Mykonos was a target for pirates. The inhabitants complained to the Porte, but the Pasha at Chios was prevented from going to Mykonos by the actions of the corsairs. One day, a captain who had previously been captured by pirates sailed to Chios and returned with the Pasha. The Pasha was determined to apprehend the privateers. He ordered the Vecciardi (the Italian ruling council of Mykonos) to bring in the captain of the band, and they in response ordered the priests to excommunicate all those who would conceal him.[86] The sanction of excommunication therefore was considered to be highly efficacious, but, in order to work, it relied on an acknowledgement of the power of the church. Many western travellers report, and sometimes admire, the fear with which the laity regarded excommunication.[87] Rycaut speaks about the excommunication "of which they so generally stand in fear, that the most profligate and obdurate conscience in other matters startles at this sentence".[88]

It was fear of the consequences that made excommunication such an effective sanction. The *tympaniaios* played an important role in creating this fear and with the expansion of ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the fifteenth century onwards there was a growing emphasis on the undecayed body as a sign of excommunication. This is demonstrated not only by the profusion of accounts of the *tympaniaios* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the marked interest of the *nomokanones* in the subject, but also by changes in the formula of the excommunication rite itself. Panagiotis Michailaris has discovered in

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[85] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 279.
[86] Randoph, *Present State*, p. 17.
[87] Ariadni Gerouki, 'Ο φόβος του αφορισμού', *Historica* 8 (1988), 53–68.
[88] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 272.

the wording of the rite an increasing elaboration of the power of excommunication to prevent decomposition. The formula develops from the simple 'μετὰ θάνατον ἀδιάλυτος' ('after death undissolved'), which occurs in the rite of 1536, through 'ἄλυτος αἰωνίως καὶ τυμπανιαῖος' (he will be 'eternally indissoluble and swollen' (*tympaniaios*)) (1612) to the longer, more explicit wording of the seventeenth-century rite:[89]

> If they restore not to him that which is his own, and possess him peaceably of it, but suffer him to remain injured and damnifyed; let him be separated from the Lord God Creatour, and be accursed, and unpardoned, and undissolvable after death in this World, and in the other which is to come. Let Wood, Stones and Iron be dissolved but not they.[90]

It becomes difficult to mention excommunication without making reference to the *tympaniaios*.

It was this fear associated with the *tympaniaios* that helped the church stave off competition from other sources of legal power. During the Tourkokratia the church was only one of several jurisdictional authorities which included the Turkish courts and the local courts run by the Catholic rulers of the islands. Litigants could choose to take their case before the Islamic rather than the Orthodox courts. In the past historians argued that the justice in Islamic courts was reputed to be uncertain and the financial cost heavy and that rather than face this ordeal, most chose to go before the ecclesiastical courts, which had a reputation for fairness.[91] However, evidence suggests that the Orthodox faithful played the various systems to their best advantage, turning to whichever would return the most favourable judgement. Even in civil matters such as marriage between two Christians, the church found it necessary to issue decrees stating that only the ecclesiastical hierarchy had the authority to join or dissolve marriages. A ruling from the Turkish authorities, from whom permissions to remarry were easier to obtain, was insufficient.[92] Thus,

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[89] Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 289. For the fourteenth century, Miklosich, *Acta*, vol. 1, p. 525 has simply 'ἀδιάλυτον μένει' (he will remain undissolved).

[90] Angelos, *Enchiridium*, p. 521; translation from Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 274–75.

[91] Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 154; Vlachos, 'La Relation', p. 141; Jacques Visvizes, 'L'Administration communale des Grecs pendant la domination turque' in *1453–1953. Le 500 ème Anniversaire de la Prise de Constantinople* (L'Hellénisme Contemporain, 2 ème série), (Athens, 1953), pp. 233–34.

[92] See the examples in Dimitrokallis, 'Μιὰ περίπτωση γάμου', 290–94.

in areas where there was a Turkish presence, the ecclesiastical courts faced competition from Turkish jurisdiction. This situation highlights the need for a strong statement of ecclesiastical power if the church was to retain its authority over the Orthodox faithful.

The legal role, which made the *tympaniaios* so important as a symbol of power, meant that the church became increasingly involved in policing lay relations. Excommunications became solemn, communal occasions and were used to regulate the relationship between the community and individual as well as between the individual and God. A traveller described the movement of a procession up the road headed by the priest, who was preceded by a large crucifix and a black banner. Excommunication took place in public, in front of the house of the one who was to be excommunicated.[93] The whole community was aware of the crime and the excommunication, and was often involved in the procession. Casting out from the church thus became a communal act, which emphasised the expulsion of the sinner from the earthly as well as the spiritual community. Ecclesiastical authority over the decay of the corpse, exercised through its power to bind and loose souls, therefore became a symbol of the church's authority over the body of the faithful as well as the body of the individual.[94] Concepts of sin and penance altered in accordance with the role of the church. The justice dispensed by the church had to satisfy the requirements of earthly justice, and became more retributive in character. The position of the Byzantine church, where the purpose of excommunication was seen more in terms of spiritual healing and growth, had moved to one where the punitive nature of excommunication was emphasised. Previously the bishop or monk had taken into account the motivation, needs and circumstances in which the sin had occurred when assessing the period of excommunication and penance. These considerations disappeared altogether with the blanket excommunications associated with oath taking and legal rulings. A sense of equivalence was established between the sin/crime and the penance/punishment. Punishment was only ended and forgiveness extended when full reparation was made. Contrition for wrongdoing was no longer sufficient. This emphasis on the need to right wrongs as well as repent, and the practice, which became

[93] Grasset, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 22.
[94] Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, p. 24.

more frequent, of extending the excommunication to the family of the excommunicant, meant that the obligations to provide compensation and restitution went beyond the grave.[95] Therefore it was not only the Catholic influence which encouraged the church to move to a position where souls received punishment after death; the demands placed on the church by its legal and spiritual responsibilities was decisive in this development.

The Tympaniaios *and the* Vrykolakas

The ability of the church to create and dispose of the *tympaniaios* helped to support its position in the Ottoman Empire. It bolstered the spiritual authority of the Orthodox against the competition of other faiths, it strengthened the legal authority of the church in the face of competing jurisdictions and it played a central role in the ecclesiastical regulation of the laity, enabling the patriarchal authorities to carry out their obligations to the sultan. It was vital that the church retained exclusive authority over the creation and destruction of the undecayed body. Therefore during the early modern period, it became increasingly important to distinguish the ecclesiastically created revenant from the lay revenant, or *vrykolakas*. To do this the church needed to stress three factors: the only undecomposed body was that of the *tympaniaios*; the *tympaniaios* could only be produced through excommunication and excommunication could only be pronounced by the church.

Alternative claims to create and destroy the body in the form of the *vrykolakas* undermined ecclesiastical authority. This may explain why, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was an increase in the number of canons dedicated to the reform of beliefs surrounding the *vrykolakas*, at the very time the undissolved body was becoming an indispensable sign of excommunication. *Nomokanones* strived to maintain a distinction between the two different kinds of revenant: one *nomokanon* states categorically that no other body could be found whole and undecayed in a tomb except that of an excommunicate.[96] The church was right to be concerned about the possi-

[95] Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, pp. 293; 298.
[96] Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες', 505.

bilities of confusion between the two types of undecayed bodies.[97] When we look more closely at the revenants, they are less easily distinguished than the *nomokanones* would have us believe. Even though the *tympaniaios* and the *vrykolakas* could be distinguished by their characteristic behaviour, and involved bodies which had been buried for different periods of time, on certain occasions they could be mistaken for each other. Rycaut described the behaviour of the corpse of an excommunicated man, who had fled to the island of Milos:

> the Paisants and Islanders were every night affrighted and disturbed with strange and unusual apparitions, which they immediately concluded arose from the Grave of the accursed Excommunicant, which, according to their Custom, they immediately opened, and therein found the Body uncorrupted, ruddy, and the Veins replete with Blood.[98]

The priests decided on a procedure which was used to remove the threat of a *vrykolakas*: the destruction of the body by cutting it into tiny pieces and boiling it in wine. The friends of the deceased, however, wished the soul to rest in peace, and obtained a reprieve during which they purchased an absolution from the patriarch. Mercifully this achieved the desired effect and the body decayed at the very moment when the absolution was granted.[99] It is interesting here that the islanders, who did not know that the man had fled from the Morea under excommunication, assumed that he had become a *vrykolakas* because his death fulfilled all the requirements. The description given of his burial rites implies that he had not received what was due to him. His body was interred in some remote and unfrequented place, carelessly and without solemnity. Far from home, his family would have been unable to carry out the required rituals. The priests too intended to carry out acts designed specifically to remove a *vrykolakas* rather than a *tympaniaios*. In contrast, his family and friends at home were aware that he was under an excommunication and followed an alternative course of action. The successful result of the absolution confirmed their interpretation of events. Rycaut's account suggests that the perspective of different groups in society determined their approach to the body. It was not always

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[97] On the problems of distinguishing between the two bodies see Michailaris, *Ἀφορισμὸς*, p. 292; Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 370 ff.

[98] Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 279–80.

[99] Ibid., pp. 281–82.

easy to discern which category the undissolved body fell into and diagnosis depended on the knowledge of the events before and immediately after death. In certain circumstances, therefore, it was possible to confuse the *tympaniaios* with the *vrykolakas*.

If the church struggled to retain the undissolved body as an exclusive symbol of its power, it also fought to preserve its authority over the method of its creation. Despite attempts to reserve the casting of excommunication to the church and restrict its use to appropriate occasions, it was also employed by the laity as a weapon in their social interactions. A priest could be paid to excommunicate unpopular neighbours. It was not the payment for the rite that was problematic, as all clerical duties attracted a charge, but the request from the laity and the attempt to use the excommunication in their daily squabbles.[100] It was believed that:

> if a Papas excommunicates or even utters an imprecation against anyone the man falls ill, and can only be restored to health by going to the very Papas who has caused his suffering, or to a bishop to obtain the removal of the ban.[101]

The words of the priest were thought to bring down the anger of God upon the excommunicated individual and this manifested itself in physical as well as spiritual harm, causing sickness and suffering. The church tried to prevent the laity from using excommunication to settle their scores, stressing that the sanction did not have automatic efficacy and only if the decree was justified would the punishment be carried out by God.[102] They also forbade clerics from bowing to the lay demand.[103] Nevertheless the practice continued and in one case on Corfu, a man even handed the protopapas a fully drafted text of an excommunication, believing it only required his signature for the excommunication to take effect.[104]

It was difficult for the church to maintain authority over excommunication because the popular understanding of the rite did not equate to the ecclesiastical one. For the church, the ability to bind and loose depended upon ecclesiastical status and was effective because the

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[100] For an example of some tariffs see Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, p. 68 n. 33.
[101] Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 222.
[102] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 151; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 71, pp. 111–12.
[103] Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, p. 35.
[104] Ibid., p. 89.

knowledge and authority of God lay behind the sanction. However, the examples above suggest that the people did not understand the workings of the excommunication rite in quite the same terms as the church. Rather than resting in the justice of God, the authority of the imprecation lay in the ecclesiastical position of the speaker and in the relationship established between the excommunicating priest and the criminal/sinner. In one account, robbers attacked a bishop while he was journeying through the countryside. When they realised who he was, they murdered him because they:

> called to mind that the bishop would, in all probability, excommunicate them, as soon as he reached a place of safety. They saw no means of averting this dreadful calamity, except by the death of the unfortunate prelate, whom they therefore pursued, overtook and shot.[105]

Surely murder was a graver sin than robbery? Why did the robbers compound theft with homicide? They considered excommunication from the bishop they had wronged to be more powerful than a general excommunication given out by the church against unknown culprits.[106] They believed that the excommunication was effective because they were known to the bishop. Although the church stated that the efficacy of the excommunication relied on the omniscience of God, for the robbers it required the personal contact between the victim and the perpetrator. The excommunication gained power through the relationship established between the two parties.

Ecclesiastical approaches encouraged such a personal interpretation surrounding excommunication. Balsamon's canon, which insisted that absolution could only be sought from the priest who pronounced the excommunication, may have been laid down to prevent absolution from being obtained too easily but it was open to other interpretations. It could easily suggest that a bond had been established between the excommunicator and excommunicated. Some even believed that aspects of this relationship were reflected in the appearance of the corpse: the rank of the cleric and the type of sentence

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[105] Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 223.

[106] It has been argued that excommunications of unnamed persons were small or little excommunications. However, Gerouki, *Les Excommunications*, pp. 29–30 has argued convincingly that the boundaries between the two break down in the early modern period under the pressure to meet the needs of society and that the only true distinction between the great and little is the result. If there is a curse involved in the excommunication then it is the great excommunication.

passed was apparent from the state of the undissolved body. The anathematised looked yellow and had wrinkled fingers, those excommunicated by divine laws were livid and ghastly white, and those that appeared black had been excommunicated by a bishop.[107] A bishop was more powerful than a priest, and so the excommunication of a bishop was stronger than that of the priest. It was for this reason, as well as that given by Balsamon, that the absolution had to be carried out by the cleric who had pronounced the excommunication, or by someone in a higher ecclesiastical position.

Although there was no explicit recognition of God as the source of ecclesiastical power in these two examples, in both the clerical office retained its authority over excommunication. It was important that a priest issued the excommunication in words or writing for it to take effect and it was the relationship between the sinner or criminal and the excommunicating cleric which strengthened the imprecation. However, in another example, the power of the words of excommunication and the personal relationship had assumed the greatest importance. A traveller described how a villager gathered together all his friends and pronounced an excommunication against his neighbour. He then built a cairn by the side of the road, so that with every stone added the pronouncement would increase in strength.[108] Here the laity began to pronounce excommunication themselves. Thus the laity not only employed the services of the church to regulate the disputes within their communities, they incorporated ecclesiastical promulgations into their personal strategies for dealing with neighbourhood disputes. The church had lost exclusive control of excommunication.

It was also difficult for the church to maintain an exclusive relationship between excommunication and the *tympaniaios*. Excommunication was viewed as a curse, albeit an ecclesiastical one, often proclaimed with far more pomp and grandeur than the curses of the laity.[109] The popular understanding of the ecclesiastical rite diminished the

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[107] Allatios, *De opin.* XIV, p. 151. Allatios states that this canon comes from a manuscript at Hagia Sophia. Father Richard also claims to have seen the manuscript and quotes from it, *Relation*, pp. 225–26; Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων', canon 71, pp. 111–12.

[108] Laurent, *Recollections*, vol. 2, pp. 87–88.

[109] Helen Saradi, 'Cursing in the Byzantine Notarial Acts: a Form of Warranty', *Byzantina* 17 (1994), 516.

difference between excommunication and other curses. The ecclesiastical curse shared features with lay curses, most obviously both called down the anger of God upon the malfeasant, and in lay curses, as in the lay view of excommunication, the words and the relationship between curser and cursed were vital for the successful performance of the malediction. In the case of the marriage curse, the power lay in the words pronounced and in the relationship which existed between the curser and the cursed, which was bound in the knot over which the curse was spoken. As this example suggests, lay curses employed the binding and loosing terminology so vital to excommunication. When the laity took over excommunication, therefore, it was treated as any other lay curse. With the lay appropriation of the ecclesiastical curse the church was losing control over the means of creating the *tympaniaios*.

The fact that excommunication could be categorised as a curse and was viewed by the laity as such, blurred the distinction between the methods of creating the *vrykolakas* and *tympaniaios*. As we have seen, after death the excommunicate became a *tympaniaios*; the cursed person became a *vrykolakas*, but the difference between the two types of curses was not always clear in the eyes of the laity. In some cases the laity as well as the clergy attempted to use excommunication, and popular as well as ecclesiastical curses could prevent the body from decaying. A parent's curse, for example, could prevent the 'front parts' of the body from decaying. Moreover, the excommunication formula blurred the distinction between excommunication and other curses by incorporating them within its structure. For example, excommunication could draw on the authority of the curses of the 318 Fathers of Nicaea, the curse of the Leprosy of Gehazi, and the Judas curse, which was extremely popular during the Byzantine period.[110] The curse of Judas is particularly interesting in the context of the undecomposed body. The curse directs attention to his particularly unpleasant death and its aftermath. After betraying Christ, Judas attempted to commit suicide but was cut down before he suffocated. Because of his impiety, his flesh swelled up to such an extent that he was unable to pass along roads that carts could drive

[110] Saradi, 'Cursing', 506; 507; 508. For the incorporation of these curses into the seventeenth-century rite see Angelos, *Enchiridium*, p. 521; translation from Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 274.

through. Later he appeared to people in the roads, his body seeping and worm-eaten. This kind of behaviour is close to that of a *vrykolakas* and as a suicide Judas falls into one of the categories of death that produces a *vrykolakas*.[111] For this reason he has been referred to as the first *vrykolakas* but he cannot be seen as the exact prototype of either the *vrykolakas* or the *tympaniaios*, for his behaviour conforms to that of the former, whereas the cause of fate, his impiety, is much closer to the latter.[112] Nevertheless, the incorporation of the Judas curse into the excommunication rite, once more brings the *tympaniaios* and the *vrykolakas* closer together.

Consequently, the *tympaniaios* and the *vrykolakas* were not always as easily distinguished as the *nomokanones* would have us believe. The knowledge of the particular events surrounding the death of an individual, as well as the personal history of the deceased governed the category into which the corpse was placed. Even then confusion was possible, for the ecclesiastical curse, which produced the *tympaniaios*, had been appropriated by the laity and thus lay cursing could produce either a *vrykolakas* or a *tympaniaios*. Other aspects of the excommunication rite also meant that the *tympaniaios* overlapped with the *vrykolakas*. Ecclesiastical prescriptions that prevented the usual observances being performed for the body of an excommunicate brought it into the sphere of the *vrykolakas*, where failure to perform customary rites was a fundamental factor in its creation. Most important of all, with the increasing use of excommunication to regulate social affairs, the *tympaniaios* encroached on the sphere of operation of the *vrykolakas*. As the previous chapter revealed, communal and family obligations were of central importance in the dynamics surrounding the appearance of the *vrykolakas*. Moreover, the actions taken by the Orthodox church to distinguish the revenants brought them closer together. The *nomokanones* encouraged the laity to consider the *vrykolakas* as well as the *tympaniaios* to be the result of impiety, albeit of the community rather than the individual, and the rituals of exorcism for the *vrykolakas* were similar to those of absolution performed for the *tympaniaios*.[113]

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[111] Papias, *Fragmenta*, *PG* 5, col. 1261; Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 63–64.

[112] On this phenomenon see H. Martin, 'The Judas Iscariot Curse', *American Journal of Philology* 37 (1916), 434–51.

[113] Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 74–5; Allatios, *De opin.* XII, pp. 144–45.

Therefore the church fought a running battle to preserve its authority over excommunication and prevent the laity from appropriating the symbol of the undecayed body. The emphasis in the *nomokanones* on ecclesiastical power, that only an ecclesiastical excommunication could create a *tympaniaios*, was not simply an empty formula; it reflected the active struggle of the church to maintain control of the phenomenon. However, in the early modern period, just as the church needed so desperately to demonstrate its power in the face of challenges to its ecclesiastical and civil authority, its very actions diminished the difference between the ecclesiastically created revenant and that of the laity. The expansion of ecclesiastical jurisdiction meant that excommunication came to be used to regulate society to a far greater extent and that therefore the *tympaniaios* as well as the *vrykolakas* was more closely tied to social relations than before. The increasing employment of excommunication in place of the older custom of using curses in legal documents strengthened the link between excommunication and other curses and this in turn made it more difficult to distinguish between the creation of the *vrykolakas* and the creation of the *tympaniaios*. These complicated relationships between the two revenants and the society in which they appeared can help to explain why accounts of the *vrykolakas* started to materialise in such great numbers at the very time when the undissolved body became an essential consequence of excommunication.

Allatios' Interpretation of the Orthodox Revenants

Does the possibility of confusing the *vrykolakas* and *tympaniaios* go any way towards explaining why Allatios conflated the two? Was it the case that on Chios the two traditions were seen as one and the same? The folklorist Stylianos Vios collected an account from Chios in 1926 that might indicate that they were. After a month in the tomb, he was told, an excommunicate became a *vrykolakas* and marauded round the town.[114] However, evidence suggests that this was not necessarily the case during the seventeenth century. Thevenot reported that according to the monks of Nea Moni, "if any of the dead Bodies do not corrupt, the rest of the *Calloyers* say, it is a sign

[114] Stylianos Vios, 'Χιακαὶ παραδόσεις', *Λαογραφία* 9 (1926), 224.

that they are excommunicated."[115] A little later he mentioned an undecayed dead body again, but this time, "the Inhabitants of this place firmly believe, that if a dead Body do (sic) not in forty days time corrupt, it turns to a Hobgoblin, which they call *Zorzolacas*, or *Nomolacas*."[116] He proceeded to relate an example of this from a manuscript that he had seen. This told of a priest who was seen reading over a dead body, uncorrupted after fifty days in the tomb. The priest explained the disruption caused by the body, which roamed about at night, knocking on doors calling out names. Those that replied died. This of course is behaviour characteristic of a *vrykolakas*, and it is likely that *nomolakas* was the word for *vrykolakas* in the Chian dialect. It is difficult to know how strict a line was drawn between the two types of revenant. Were the excommunicated bodies called *nomolakes* too? It is significant, however, that it is the ecclesiastics who identify the uncorrupted body as an excommunicate, whereas the laity refers to it as a *nomolakas*, and it is the *nomolakas*, not the excommunicated body, that displays the characteristic behaviour of the *vrykolakas*. Here, as in all the other cases of the *vrykolakas*, there is no mention of the body being excommunicated. Originally related by a priest, the story of the *nomolakas* would not have omitted to mention this vital piece of information had it been an excommunication that had created the revenant. The confusion of the two revenants in the modern account is perhaps a consequence of the developments during the Tourkokratia described above.

Even if the popular Chian tradition conflated the two revenants, in contrary to the reports of Thevenot, Allatios' interpretation was directed by his western interests rather than his understanding of the popular beliefs. The influence of his Catholicism is clear from his interpretation of the issues of penance and repentance surrounding the *tympaniaios*. Of course, Orthodoxy as a whole was influenced by Catholicism at this time, but Allatios' interpretation of the *vrykolakas* and the *tympaniaios* still differs from that of the Orthodox clergy. While Allatios' interpretation acts to conflate the two revenants, the Catholic influence on the Orthodox clergy, which encouraged the interpretation of the *tympaniaios* in terms of punishment after death, created a need to distinguish between the two revenants. Allatios

[115] Thevenot, *Travels*, part 1, p. 96.
[116] Ibid., p. 98.

could not have been unaware of the distinction made by the church between the *vrykolakas* and the *tympaniaios* — the very sources he uses proclaim it clearly. However, he did not attempt to explain the discrepancy between his source material and his own interpretation because he was less concerned with understanding the tradition in its own context than describing the undecayed bodies of the Greeks in terms of purgatory, confirmed by his return to the subject in his *De Purgatorio*. In his identification of revenants with purgatory, Allatios was following in a tradition that would have been familiar to his fellow Catholics. In Catholic countries there were frequent reports of individuals returning from the dead and the very existence of revenants was seen as proof of the existence of purgatory against the Protestant rejection of it.[117] Those who had been assigned to heaven or hell could not leave; it was only the 'middling souls' in purgatory which were free to return to earth as revenants and explain their experiences.

It was necessary for Allatios to conflate the two revenants in order to make them conform to western expectations of purgatorial spirits, walking the streets, warning relatives of the fate that would befall them if they did not repent of their sins during their lifetime. In the *tympaniaios* the excommunicate underwent a kind of purgatory here on earth and in Allatios' opinion provided a way for the Orthodox sinner to perform penance after death for debts which had not been wiped. However, in other ways the behaviour of the *vrykolakas*, seeking out its kin and walking the streets, seems far closer to the behaviour of the western purgatorial revenants and ghosts. It was not only Allatios who was tempted to view the *vrykolakas* in this way. Father Richard too originally interpreted the behaviour of the *vrykolakas* rather than the *tympaniaios* in these terms.[118] Allatios therefore needed to bring the two Greek revenants together to get a closer approximation of the Catholic experience.

Allatios' interpretation of the *tympaniaios* and the *vrykolakas* therefore cannot be taken at face value. He was more interested in using

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[117] Jürgen Beyer, 'A Lübeck Prophet in Local and Lutheran Context' in Scribner, *Popular Religion*, p. 172; see also *Histoire remarquable d'une femme decedee depuis cinq ans en ça, laquelle est revenuë trouver son mary et parler à luy aux faux bourgs S. Marcel lez Paris* (Paris, 1618), pp. 5–7; 15–16 in which a western revenant is discussed in terms of purgatory.

[118] Richard, *Relation*, p. 209. For Richard the soul remained inside the *vrykolakas* and therefore it could be used to prove to atheists that the soul survived the death of the body. See p. 213.

popular beliefs to bridge the gap between Orthodox and Catholic doctrinal positions than in investigating them for their own sake. The popular beliefs were employed in the service of his ecumenical project. The *tympaniaios* and *vrykolakas* were not the only beliefs used in this way and in the next chapter we turn our attention to popular healing and the role Allatios assigns to it in his investigation of the relationship between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

CHAPTER NINE

ALLATIOS AND POPULAR HEALING

A text on popular religion might seem a strange offering from Allatios to Zacchias, but it is perhaps not surprising that a letter written by a doctor to a doctor displays some interest in the problems of disease causation and cure, even though the subject matter is not a medical one. A common theme connects all the *exotika* discussed by Allatios in the first half of the *De opinationibus*: they were all associated in the popular mind with particular physical conditions. The *gello* was seen as causing poor health in new-born children and their mothers.[1] The *vrykolakas* brought plague to the community.[2] The *nereides* struck down particularly beautiful young men who wandered off the path into their spheres of influence, causing a stroke, seizure and subsequent deformity.[3] On the other hand, a disease might actually cause the afflicted to see a demon. In the case of the *babutzikarios*, poor eyesight caused the suffering individual to see things that were not there. One man believed he was pursued by the *babutzikarios*, unaware of the physical condition which caused him to have hallucinations.[4] Physical symptoms were experienced in terms of demonic attack. The theme of healing also runs through the work. Allatios describes the use of exorcism, amulets, and baptism, but pride of place in his discussion goes to unction. This chapter considers Allatios' presentation of disease and healing, following his own emphasis on the topic of unction, and examines why the pathology of disease is so important to Allatios' discussion of popular beliefs. In order to investigate Allatios' interpretation it is necessary to investigate how his descriptions fit into the wider context of sickness and its cure within the Orthodox tradition before considering his own understanding and appraisal of these practices.

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[1] Allatios, *De opin.* IX, p. 138.
[2] Ibid., XII, p. 146.
[3] Ibid., XIX, p. 158.
[4] Ibid., X, p. 140.

Demons and Disease

The association of demons with illness is evident in exorcism texts contemporary with Allatios. These contain prayers to cast out demons which were identified with a whole range of conditions, from headaches through kidney ailments to smallpox.[5] One exorcism manual from the turn of the eighteenth century contains references to over one hundred physical and mental complaints which afflict human beings and still more which trouble both humans and animals.[6] It concentrates mainly on the demons of smallpox, headache and the typical disease of possession, epilepsy, but there are exorcisms which have a wider focus and address serious conditions in more general terms.[7] An eighteenth-century handbook of exorcisms makes the relationship between illness and demons explicit. God is asked to "expel this spirit from your creature because it introduced the present, very serious sickness".[8] Later the exorcist again asks, "expel from your servant every evil spirit and sickness and every spirit of sickness." No distinction is made here between disease and demonic possession.[9]

It should be stated that this was not the only view of disease. Michael Psellos insisted on the natural causes of poor health.[10] Moreover, natural and demonic interpretations of sickness could coexist. Later Byzantine saints' lives, such as that of Athanasios I, patriarch of Constantinople (1289–1293; 1303–1309), recognised the possibility of two causes of illness. A priest called Theodore, from a village in Bithynia, had been suffering from a condition which caused his whole body to burn with fever. A friend of his told him about the great man, Athanasios, and:

> how he easily drove away every disease and sickness caused by illness or evil spirits, as the sun <disperses> the darkness and morning dew and dissolves them into nothingness, as if they had never existed at all.[11]

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[5] Athanasios Diamandopoulos, 'Exorcisms Used for Treatment of Urinary Tract Diseases in Greece during the Middle Ages and Renaissance', *American Journal of Nephrology* 19:2 (1999), 114–24.

[6] George Pilitsis, 'Of Demons and Disease: an Eighteenth-Century Greek Manual of Exorcisms', *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 11 (1994), 144.

[7] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 445.

[8] Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 46.

[9] Ibid., p. 130.

[10] See for example the accounts of the *gello* and the *babutzikarios* in O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, pp. 163–64.

[11] Alice-Mary Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium: the Posthumous Miracles of the*

Here a distinction is made between conditions 'caused by illness', that is bodily malfunction, and conditions caused by demonic action. Often, however, the cause of a particular malady was not specified. In another case:

> a young man named Manuel Bourdes, who lived by the shore of the Kynegoi quarter, was stricken by a disease which is very difficult to cure (either as the result of a demonic attack, or because disease brought it on through the rising of evil and pestilential humors [sic] to the brain, which doctors say is caused by black bile).[12]

Thus, in this example, demonic and natural causation did not come into conflict.

Nevertheless, other texts, including some of those quoted in the *De opinationibus*, understood sickness in purely demonic terms and posit a connection between the actions of a specific demon and a particular ailment. The headache demon only brought headaches, the *gello* only childhood and postpartum disorders. As Allatios and Psellos claimed, these understandings of illness were representative of the popular outlook and should be distinguished from the official views of the Orthodox church. The hierarchy rejected the one-to-one relationship between demons and disease as far too corporeal and anthropomorphic but it did not reject demonic causation altogether.[13] Theologians admitted demons were a cause of ill health but in a much more general sense. Examples that Allatios excerpted from early saints' lives are consistent with this approach. It was said of St Neilos of Rossano that "after calling the one who discharges the priestly office, he ordered him to go into the oratory and, after praying for the sick, to anoint that man with oil of the lamp and send him away".[14] It is clear that sickness was caused by a demon because it departed when the patient was anointed.

In popular discussions of disease, demons were compelled by their natures to seek nourishment, and to possess human or animal forms in order to satisfy their desires.[15] The demons acted under their own

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Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople, by Theoktistos the Stoudite (Brookline, Massachusetts, 1983), pp. 84–85.

[12] Ibid., p. 105.

[13] Pilitsis, 'Demons and Disease', 14.

[14] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 120; Jean Baptiste Carnandet (ed.), 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', *Acta sanctorum: quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur*, vol. 7, *Septembris* (Paris, 1867), chs. 58–59, p. 294.

[15] Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp. 213–15.

volition to fulfil their own needs: the *gello* killed children because of her jealousy;[16] the headache demon desired to crush brains and pull out teeth.[17] To this motivation was sometimes added a hatred of the human race. The church authorities rejected the popular outlook because of its inherent dualism but they accepted that demons were impelled by their anger and hatred of God's creation to attack mankind, and also his animals.[18] For the church hierarchy, the actions of demons had to be placed firmly under the power of God. God was the ultimate source of demonic attack and illness was thought to originate in God's wrath.[19] However, this view was not exclusively held by the ecclesiastics. The plague in particular was interpreted as the "vengeance from an angry God" and during times of pestilence, individuals and communities questioned their religious practices, searching for the reason for God's rage.[20] Thus the Jesuit Fleuriau wrote that during an outbreak of plague in Constantinople his mission received the conversion of many 'schismatics'.[21] Allatios explained the actions of the *vrykolakas* along these lines. He characterised these creatures as "the servants of divine wrath" who, having suffered themselves, 'also rage against others', spreading disease through the neighbourhood. God punished the individual sinner, but also the sinful community around him/her. This interpretation placed demons firmly under the control of God and did not allow them any independent action.

Popular Unction in the De opinationibus

The way that disease was understood affected the treatment sought. Exorcism, the casting out of demonic forces, was the most obvious remedy for demonic possession. The many exorcism texts still extant testify to its popularity. However, Allatios did not discuss exorcism

[16] See Allatios, *De opin.* III, pp. 117–18 and for a discussion see above chapter 4, p. 86, chapter 5 p. 129, chapter 6 pp. 146–57.
[17] Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 420.
[18] Ibid., p. 29.
[19] See also chapter 4 pp. 90–92 above section for a more detailed discussion of the ecclesiastical objection to the popular view of demons.
[20] Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 257. The plague was a hideous creature who marked the houses that she intended to visit with an indelible sign.
[21] Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 30.

in great depth. His treatment was limited to the *gello* texts and even these were identified as talismans or phylacteries rather than exorcisms.[22] In the section that he devoted to healing, Allatios concentrated above all on various different kinds of unction used by the faithful, referring to the practices as 'ἅγιον ἔλαιον' [*agion elaion*] or 'ἔλεος [*eleos*]', 'holy oil'. The practice, which was current in his own day, was deeply rooted in the Byzantine tradition and Allatios presents a wide range of different practices of anointing, which were accessed by the faithful in their search for healing. In the *De opinationibus* he divides up his discussion of unction according to how the oil or water obtained its sanctifying power and considers the different uses of holy substances in sacramentals, saintly healing and popular healing. Most of his examples relate to the power of oil taken from the lamp burning before the holy icons. The application of this oil for healing purposes, he tells us, is a 'most ancient usage' and the practice was still current in his own day.

Holy oil, like exorcism, was efficacious against demonic possession. St Sabas (439–532), for example, was described by his hagiographer, Cyril of Scythopolis, anointing a sick woman and returning her to her family freed from demons.[23] In the *Life* of St Neilos, when a man was anointed with oil from the lamp on the order of the saint, the demon immediately departed through his nostrils.[24] Saints living in the later Byzantine period confirm the continuing use of oil from the lamp. St Athanasios applied oil to cure a blind man and "as soon as the oil anointed his eyes, immediately sweet light entered them, instantly, as the saying goes, shining into them".[25] What Allatios called 'oil of the cross' could be used in the same way. According to Allatios, the title 'oil of the cross' denoted oil which had been sanctified in a variety of different ways. It could be used for oil exuded by the cross itself, or oil from a lamp burning before the cross, or oil blessed by the sign of the cross.[26] Tournefort provided an additional explanation. It was called oil of the cross

[22] Allatios, *De opin.* VII, p. 126.

[23] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 20; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Leipzig, 1939), ch. 27, p. 110.

[24] Ibid., ch. IV, p. 120; Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chs. 58–59.

[25] Talbot, *Faith Healing*, pp. 86–87.

[26] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 122. See also below, pp. 243–48 where the rite of unction is described. The oil from the lamp is signed with a cross during the ceremony.

because it had pieces of the true cross mixed into it.[27] In fact, Allatios' use of the terms 'oil from the lamp' and 'oil of the cross' showed that, in practice, he made little distinction between them.[28] In Allatios' examples of the practice of anointing, St Sabas used oil from the cross, whereas in the subsequent example from the *Life* of St Neilos of Rossano, the saint used oil from the lamp to drive out the demons.[29]

However, Allatios did make a distinction between oil that had been blessed and oil that had been taken from the lamp. He wrote that "others drive away illness not with oil from the lamp, but [with oil] which they themselves bless."[30] For example, a disciple of St Theodore the Stoudite anointed a sick girl with oil blessed by the saint and she was cured.[31] It is evident that Allatios understood oil from the lamp to derive its holiness from its proximity to holy objects — the icon or the cross — and the other oil from being blessed or consecrated.

Water sanctified by contact with holy objects could also be therapeutic. Allatios relates that the congregation was anointed with the water used to wash the altar on Great Thursday and also with the water used in the ceremony of Nipter or 'The Washing of the Feet' which occurred on the same day.[32] In this ceremony, the feet of twelve priests were cleaned in celebration of the events described in John 13: 1–9, where Christ is described washing the feet of his followers on the evening before Passover.[33] The reputed healing qualities of the water thus treated were reported with great horror by travellers during this period, particularly as people would sometimes drink it, rather than use it for anointing.[34]

In the above instances, the faithful were anointed by the church during particular ceremonies, or by saints in times of need, but the faithful also had direct access to oil from the lamp and used it in healing rituals. Allatios describes how in his own time:

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[27] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 95, margin note.
[28] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 122.
[29] Ibid., IV, p. 120; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Kyrillos*, ch. 27, p. 110; Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chs. 58–59, p. 294.
[30] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124.
[31] Ibid.; *Vita Theodori Studitae*, *PG* 99, col. 209 B.
[32] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 125; *Τὸ παρὸν τυπικόν τετύπωται*, ed. Antonio Pinelli (Venice, 1615), ch. 41, p. 82r; ch. 42, p. 83r.
[33] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124. Goar, *Euchologion*, pp. 591–97.
[34] Covel, *Diaries*, pp. 157–58.

> very many people stuff cotton or silk, dipped in oil from a lamp lit before the said divinities, into a hollow reed in order to preserve the oil uncontaminated by contact with other substances.[35]

This oil was then taken home and used to anoint the 'chief parts' of the patient.[36] Again, in the *Life* of Athanasios, the faithful effected a cure using oil they had taken from the tomb of the saints. A woman was suffering from an affliction of the womb, "but when she went to the tomb of the holy man, she received mercy through anointing herself with oil and was completely relieved of her affliction."[37] If no oil was available, herbs and shrubs were used in popular healing practices. In these cases, rather than using items that had been sanctified by the church, the faithful employed objects that had become holy through contact with the icons. Allatios relates how people took the plants which had been placed around the icons of the saints in the church, and used these rather than oil to anoint the principal parts of the invalid: "This was also called sacred oil from the original application of the remedy although it was not oil."[38]

The Orthodox Sacrament of Unction

Unction not only had the power to expel demons, it also addressed another cause of sickness: the wrath of God. Unction was closely bound to repentance. For Patriarch Jeremias II, unction, like baptism and repentance, offered the opportunity for forgiveness: "And to those who commit sins after Baptism, repentance and anointing by Holy Unction offer forgiveness and clean the spots from the soul."[39] For the Russian metropolitan, Peter of Moghila, a century later, confession was an essential precondition of unction; the invalid must have "beforehand, confessed all his Sins unto his spiritual Father".[40] This statement related not to popular unction, but to the sacrament

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[35] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 118.

[36] There seems to be no consensus on the exact parts of the body to which this refers. Allatios describes the anointing of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and chest but during the sacrament of unction, it was the eyes, nose, cheeks, and the palm and the back of the hand on which the oil was rubbed. Ibid., IV, p. 122.

[37] Talbot, *Faith Healing*, pp. 90–91.

[38] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 122.

[39] Tsirpanlis, *Jeremiah*, p. 43.

[40] Moghila, *Confession*, p. 88.

of the same name. Allatios does not discuss the sacrament of unction, but because it contains a clear statement of the official position on Orthodox religious healing it will be analysed below. This analysis will then be used to investigate the relationship between the sacrament and popular unction, before returning to Allatios' perception of popular practices.

It is evident from Rycaut's description of the mystery of '*euchelaion*', or 'Oyl of Prayer' that the sacrament of unction was performed in the seventeenth century:

> This Oyl of Prayer is pure and unmixed Oyl, without any other composition; a quantity whereof, sufficient to serve for the whole year, is consecrated on Wednesday in the holy Week by the Archbishop or Bishop, though it may be administred, or application made thereof by three Priests. This is the same with that which in the Roman Church is called, Extreme Unction, grounded on the words of St James, Cap. 5.14.[41]

The sacrament, Rycaut reports, was administered to "such penitents who are sick and languishing". His account describes the same practice that is carried out today and the prayers cited by Rycaut are identical to those used in the current celebration of the sacrament.

According to Rycaut, the sacrament of unction, called 'εὐχέλαιον' ('*euchelaion*') or 'ἅγιον ἔλαιον' was celebrated on the Wednesday of Holy Week, but it could also take place on Great Thursday. During the ceremony, the oil to be used for the rest of the year was consecrated, and the whole congregation, not only the sick, was anointed. The remaining consecrated oil was preserved and used throughout the year as and when required, although often the rite of consecration was carried out again. The number of priests needed to perform the ceremony varied. Rycaut states that while the consecration of the oil must be performed by a bishop or archbishop, the anointing might be carried out by three priests. Following in the Byzantine tradition, Peter of Moghila preferred the ritual to be performed by seven priests (whence the sacrament takes the name *heptapapadon*), but, acknowledging the practical difficulties, permitted its administration by three priests, as indicated by Rycaut above, two or, in cases of emergency, even one.[42] The *Nomokanon* of Malaxos, the most

[41] Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 267–68.
[42] Elie Mélia, 'The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick: its Historical Develop-

important text guiding the conduct of the church in the early modern period, forbade the celebration of this sacrament by one priest alone.[43] Nevertheless, the fact the author felt it necessary to legislate on the matter reveals the difficulties encountered in gathering priests together in these uncertain times. In accepting the performance of the rite by a single priest, Moghila was merely bowing to the necessities of circumstance.

As Rycaut's description suggests, the ritual was divided into two parts: the consecration of the oil and the anointing of the invalid. Before the ceremony of consecration began, a very large lamp was filled with oil. Each priest lit his own lamp and blessed the oil within as the service proceeded. The ceremony itself began with prayers and was followed by the consecration of the oil:

> O Lord, who in their mercies and bounties, healest the disorders of our souls and bodies: do thou, the same Master, sanctify this Oil, that it may be effectual for all those who shall be anointed therewith, unto healing, and unto relief from every passion, every malady of the flesh and of the spirit, and every ill.[44]

Only once the oil had been consecrated did the ceremony of anointing begin. The readings and prayers were related to the healing ministry of Christ and his Apostles. The actual anointing of the patient took place at the same time as (or after) the prayer of anointing, which each priest recited separately:

> O holy Father, Physician of our souls and our bodies, who didst send thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which healeth every infirmity and delivereth from death: Heal thou, also, thy servant, N., from the ills of body and soul which do hinder him (her), and quicken him (her), by the grace of thy Christ; though the prayers of our most holy Lady, the Birth-giver of God and ever-virgin Mary; through the intercession of the honourable Bodiless Powers of Heaven.[45]

This prayer signified Christ's role as a healer and emphasised that any healing resulting from the anointing came from Christ rather

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ment and Current Practice' in *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy*, trans. M.J. O'Connell, 21st Liturgical Conference of St Serge (New York, 1983), p. 134.

[43] X.A. Sideridas, 'Περί τινος ἀντιγράφου τοῦ Νομοκάνονος τοῦ Μανουὴλ Μαλαξοῦ', *Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικός Σύλλογος* 30 (1908), canon 48, 137.

[44] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 335; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 340–41.

[45] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 338; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 345; Mélia, 'Anointing', p. 152.

than the priest or the oil itself. As he recited the prayer, each priest took a cotton-tipped wand, dipped it into the consecrated oil and anointed the patient. The number and parts of the body to which the oil was applied varied, but usually it was the eyes, nose, cheeks, and the palm and the back of the hand.[46] Finally, the Gospel was held face down over the invalid while the last prayer was said. The ceremony concluded with an absolution read by the priest.

Biblical readings during the sacrament justified and explained the role of the church in the healing process. They cited Christ's healing miracles which bore witness to his healing ministry here on earth and impressed upon the congregation the importance of Christ's commands to his disciples in Matthew 10:9: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give." The parable of the Good Samaritan provided a scriptural precedent for the use of oil as a healing agent.[47] Most importantly, during the rite the priest read the passage in James 5:14–15 and it is from this that sacramental status of the practice is derived:

> Is one of you ill? He should send for the elders of the congregation to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer offered in faith will save the sick man, the Lord will raise him from his bed, and any sins he may have committed will be forgiven.

Thus the rite emphasised Christ's work as a healer and asked that he continue to heal the "wounds of our souls, and of our bodies" of both 'corporeal and spiritual ills'. Moreover, it shows how the church was urged to follow his example, placing the healing of the sick within its jurisdiction.

As we have seen above, in Orthodoxy the soul and body were, and still are, considered to be closely bound together. The condition of the body was affected by the state of the soul and therefore bodily illness was connected to the individual's spiritual condition.[48] For the body to return to health, the sickness of the soul had to be addressed. This was why unction, the sacrament concerned with

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[46] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 338; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 345. In the rite of 1027 it was the face, breast and hands (Mélia, 'Anointing', p. 152), and in the ninth-century Barberini *Euchology*, the forehead, ears and hands, (Mélia, 'Anointing', p. 153).

[47] Luke 10:34.

[48] See chapter 8 pp. 201, 288 above.

physical healing, was so closely tied to repentance and the cleansing of sin. Although specific sins, either of the individual or of society, could cause disease, sickness was above all a consequence of the general sinful and fallen state of mankind. Before Adam and Eve rebelled against God, creation was immortal and perfect. This perfection was the 'natural' state of creation, that is, the state it was in when it was first created, when it was in harmony with God. It was the sin of Adam and Eve, their rebellion against God's will, which distorted the perfect relationship between God and his creation and brought decay and death. Corruption and decay were associated with the worldly sphere alone. Thus there was a connection between the distorted relationship with God and the mortal, corruptible state of creation. It was necessary to repair this relationship in order to approach as nearly as possible the 'natural' state, where disease and corruption were banished.[49] This could be achieved through repentance and forgiveness of sins.

If repentance restored the relationship with God, the blessing of the priest sanctified the individuals, or the items, and allowed them to partake of the divine sphere. The sacrament of unction includes both these elements. As Jeremias II indicated:

> Holy oil, according to tradition, is also a sacred celebration and a symbol of divine mercy, which is given to effect redemption and sanctification for those who repent and change their sinful mind. That is why it is granted as forgiveness of sins, and it heals illnesses and fills the human soul with sanctity.[50]

Anointing with holy oil conferred forgiveness of sins on those who had repented; not only this, it also raised up the human being to God, restoring mankind and nature to its state before the Fall, before corruption and death held sway. This is why in Orthodoxy all were and still are anointed with the consecrated oil either on Wednesday or Thursday of Holy Week, for all are sinners, located in the worldly sphere, prone to disease and corruption.

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[49] Meyendorff, *Theology*, pp. 134–35; Stanley Samuel Harakas, *Health and Medicine in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition: Faith, Liturgy and Wholeness* (New York, 1990), p. 35.

[50] Tsirpanlis, *Jeremiah*, p. 44.

The Relationship between the Orthodox Sacrament of Unction and Popular Practice

Popular anointing practices and the sacrament of unction shared many features, although of course they differed in that the sacrament of unction transmitted the grace of God, purely by virtue of being a sacrament. In the popular sphere as in the sacrament, religious remedies were efficacious for all disease, not just that which had been explicitly caused by demons. There is no mention of demons in the account of the sickness of Emperor Michael IX (1294–1320), which Allatios excerpted from Pachymeres: "seized by sadness and mourning . . . he fell gravely ill, and clearly losing interest in life, he was brought into extreme danger".[51] There was also no suggestion of demonic possession in Allatios' childhood ailment when, aged seven, he was "laid up [in bed], suffering from a serious illness."[52] In neither case was there any mention of a demonic cause, nor any departure of demons with the cure. In both cases, however, religious healing was employed.

Moreover, in Allatios' account, the use of holy oil by saints, and its employment in the sacrament, sacramentals, and popular practice, was bound together by the common name, 'ἅγιον ἔλαιον'. The name covered many different practices, but all included the act of anointing. Whereas in the popular practice blessed oil, oil from the lamp and oil of the cross existed separately as remedies for disease, the oil used in the sacrament was sanctified by all three methods of sanctification. The oil used was taken from the lamp, where it had been in proximity to the holy icons, signed with a cross, and blessed by a priest. In the practices described by Allatios, the relationship between healing and God was explicitly recognised in the alternative name given to the practice. It was not only called 'ἅγιον ἔλαιον' but also 'ἔλεος' or 'mercy'. This was because it was through the oil that the mercy of God was conferred upon the sufferer, healing both body and soul. A statement in the *Life* of Patriarch Athanasios, reveals the connection that existed between the two. Oil from the lamp burning before the shrine of Athanasios was found to relieve the

[51] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, pp. 120–22; Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 5:10, pp. 391–92.

[52] Allatios, *De opin.* V, pp. 122–23.

pain of many people suffering from urinary problems: "this oil was simply transformed into mercy [ἔλεος] instantly and unbelievably by those who used it and anointed themselves with it in faith."[53] The oil was called mercy because it conveyed God's mercy upon the invalid.

The link between sin and disease, repentance and health is not explicitly expressed in Allatios' discussion of popular healing, but sin was, as we have seen, a common interpretation of the cause of sickness. Again, although Allatios did not discuss the relationship between repentance, sanctification, and healing, the blessing pronounced by the priest, which altered the nature of corruptible earthly matter, was a central feature of other popular practices surrounding ecclesiastical rituals. At Epiphany, water was collected up in jars after it had been blessed. The blessing performed a miracle, for when the jars were full "as much wine is drawn from the tap as water went into the cask." The sanctified nature of the water/wine gave it healing properties and the vessels were supposed to be taken to the sick and used to fortify children. Through the blessing, the water was raised above the worldly sphere and was no longer subject to corruption and decay. People maintained that "the water blessed on the day of that benediction [Epiphany] neither corrupts nor becomes stale." Moreover, "they relate the same concerning the consecrated bread, which they claim suffers no corruption and putrefaction."[54] If, however, the consecrated objects were put to sinful purposes, they returned to their fallen state and were once more subject to the laws of corruption. If the miraculous wine of Epiphany was consumed by greedy individuals, it quickly turned to vinegar.[55] The corruption of other sanctified objects, such as the Eucharistic elements, was viewed very seriously because it occurred as a consequence of past sins or heralded an ominous future event.[56]

The supplication to the saints and the Virgin Mary was also important in both popular and official unction. The sacrament appealed to the Virgin Mary many times, calling her the 'refuge' of the sick, and this is how Allatios describes her in his discussion of the popular

[53] Talbot, *Faith Healing*, p. 94.
[54] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIV, p. 172.
[55] Ibid., XXIV, p, 170.
[56] Ibid., XXIV, pp. 73–77; Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 1:28, pp. 77–78.

practice.[57] It was the prayer of anointing, however, in which the role of the saints was most evident in the sacrament. It asked that the afflicted person be healed through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the might of the Christ, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and the unmercenary doctor saints or *anargyroi*: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleemon and Hermolaos, Samson and Diomedes, Photios and Aniketas; and Joachim and Anna, the parents of Mary.[58] The pairs of *anargyroi* are particularly apt intercessors. As in the case of the *gello* exorcism, the prayer established a connection between the saint and the invalid, and placed the sick person under saintly protection. In popular practice, anointing with oil created a link between the patient and the saint, as the patient was then commended to "the saint from whose lamp the oil comes."[59] It placed the saint in a position of protector over the invalid, encouraging him or her to act as an intercessor.[60]

The practice of reading the Gospels over the invalid also had currency outside the sacrament. The missionary, Father Richard, reports how an Orthodox priest tried to heal his wife, who was having difficulties while in labour, by reading the Gospels over her.[61] This was also the method used to cure headaches and other pains: "those that have paines in their head or are ill come to the Priest, and lean down their head . . . on which he layes his book, and reads some piece of the Gospell."[62] All the above practices could be explained in terms acceptable to the church because they formed part of the sacrament.[63] The words of the Gospels encouraged and fortified the patients and raised their minds to appeal to God. Unction, using a blessed or sanctified substance, marked out the penitent and communicated God's blessing to him. Thus the practices fitted into the cosmology proposed by the ecclesiastical authorities, where God was sovereign in the universe, and his blessings or words, and his saints, or

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[57] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 118.
[58] Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 338; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 345.
[59] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 119.
[60] See chapter 4 pp. 99–102 and chapter 5 pp. 127–28 above where the act of naming exerts a force and creates a link between the namer and the named.
[61] Richard, *Relation*, p. 398.
[62] Covel, *Diaries*, p. 145.
[63] Harakas, *Health*, p. 101. In the fifth century the Roman church allowed the faithful to anoint with oil which had already been prepared by the bishop.

soldiers at arms, had the power to overcome the attacks of the devil.

The compatibility of the various elements of the sacramental and popular practices meant that popular unction, unlike other practices described by Allatios, was acceptable to the Orthodox church. Unction, in contrast to popular exorcism, was not in danger of pulling adherents into the heresy of dualism.[64] In fact, popular unction and the sacrament of the same name existed in harmony. Popular practices provided for people's everyday healing needs but retained a focus on the church, and depended upon and directed attention to the annual celebration of the sacrament when priests blessed the oil. For the official church, God was the ultimate source of power in popular unction and it was mediated through the church and its saints. Thus in this interpretation popular unction neither contravened the theology of the church, nor really threatened its monopoly of supernatural power. Therefore popular anointing, unlike the other popular beliefs and practices described by Allatios, was not outlawed by the church. Unction was acceptable and meaningful for church and laity alike, fitting into both popular and official understandings of the way the world worked.

However, the partnership between the faithful and the church should not obscure the underlying differences in approach to healing practices. The similar name and shared elements allowed the faithful to blur the differences between the distinct ecclesiastical practices. The concentration on the type of substance — oil or water — and the way it became holy — through burning in the lamp, through consecration, through prayer and through contact with holy objects — obscured the different ecclesiastical contexts for the rites. The church distinguished between the different healing practices. In the sacrament, the grace of God was transmitted through the celebrating priest by virtue of his priesthood. However, the anointing by a saint also had special force. It acquired its power by virtue of the special relationship between the saint and God, although the oil had often received an ecclesiastical blessing too. When the laity themselves took consecrated oil from the lamp in the church, they were accessing the holiness of the oil, which had acquired this property through the consecration of the priest and through its proximity to the church

[64] See chapter 4 pp. 90–92 above.

sanctuary or a holy icon. When herbs were used instead of oil, these received no ecclesiastical blessing and derived their power purely through contact with holy objects.

For the church, the consecration of the oil did not make it powerful in itself, but transformed it into a vessel through which God's blessing was communicated. Neither was bodily healing a necessary result of the anointing. A cure depended upon the will of God, hence the appeal to the saints to intercede with Christ on behalf of the patient. In popular unction the efficacy of anointing was not necessarily understood in the same terms. The practices outlined by Allatios did not depend on the sanctification of the oil by a priest for their power: he makes a distinction between oil that has been blessed and oil which is taken from a lamp, suggesting that the oil became holy through different means in each case. In fact, the Orthodox church did use consecrated oil in these lamps, although, on the grounds of the distinction he makes, Allatios perhaps was unaware of this. Instead, in the popular practices it was the proximity of the oil to holy objects in the church — to the cross, altar, chalice and holy icons — that was important for its holy status. Therefore garlands of flowers, which had been brought into contact with a holy object such as an altar or an icon, could also be used for anointing, although they had not been consecrated.

However, the beliefs and practices of the laity must also be considered in their own context. Along with unction, people turned to other practices which were not so acceptable to the church. Unction was only one of a panoply of remedies available and it was used indiscriminately together with amulets and popular exorcisms which had been proscribed by the church. The latter methods were rejected because they attributed power to objects and rituals themselves, and so suggested alternative sources of power to God.[65] In the same way, in the popular rite, the oil or other substance took on this power and the popular beliefs surrounding unction should be viewed in their religio-magical context. Admittedly, it was the association with icons, ecclesiastical objects or rituals which charged the oil or water with power, but that substance was then deemed to be powerful in itself. On asking why all struggled for the water in which the feet of the 'Apostles' had been washed on Maundy Thursday, Covel was

[65] See chapter 4 pp. 90–92 above.

told that "it must be very pretious after so many good prayers".[66] The prayers had made the water holy in itself. In the same way, Allatios describes how contact with the altar after the most holy celebration of the Eucharist charged the water with holiness. Likewise, the oil absorbed sacred power through being placed in close proximity to an icon of a saint or the cross, or by being blessed. Indeed, the early church had been aware of the propensity of unction to be understood in magical terms and had tried to prevent this taking place with respect to the sacrament.[67]

It is the holiness that the oil had attained which gave it the power to expel the disease from the body. The demon could not bear the presence of the holy substance and was driven from its host. Through the anointing of the patient with oil on 'chief parts' of the body, the disease or demon was expelled. It is interesting that in the popular practice described by Allatios, these parts are identified as the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and chest. For the church this anointing sanctified the senses. However, the popular practice should also be placed in the context of beliefs about the demons attacking the body — after all the people turned to unction to expel the demon and protect against further attack. The demon was believed to enter the body through 'openings'. The eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth were portals through which the demon could attack. The chest housed the heart, thought to be the seat of the soul, and therefore the place where the demons tried to lodge themselves.[68]

Although the chrism of baptism should not be confused with the sacrament of unction, attention should be drawn to the common exorcistic and apotropaic power of the oil in both cases.[69] In baptism the oil is first consecrated and sealed and then the candidate is anointed. The purpose of the anointing is to seal the baptizand against the temptations of the devil. In earlier rites, the anointing with oil had an exorcistic function too, continuing the programme of exorcisms which takes place in baptism itself.[70] This exorcistic function of the oil is clearly seen in accounts of miraculous healings in saints' lives. In the *Life* of Neilos of Rossano it was the anointing

[66] Covel, *Diaries*, p. 158.
[67] Mélia, 'Anointing', p. 133; Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 199.
[68] See chapter 7 p. 188 above.
[69] Kelly, *Baptism*, pp. 136–37; 169; Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 146.
[70] See chapter 5 pp. 108–109.

which drives out the demon: "When the deed was done, immediately the young man was restored to health and the demon departed from his nostrils like a puff of smoke."[71]

Popular unction therefore stood at the intersection of popular and official practices. It drew on aspects of the sacrament and affirmed the centrality of the church in popular practices. Yet in popular religion, the sacrament of unction and the popular practices linked to it were perceived in a way that differed from the official church understanding. While the church might distinguish between 'magical' practices and 'true' religion, for the Orthodox faithful they formed a continuum.

Allatios and Popular Practices

In contrast to his evaluation of other practices, Allatios' assessment of popular healing is very favourable. He emphasises that these rituals of the Greeks should be seen in a positive light, and indicate the true devoutness of their natures. Moreover, he agrees that unction is efficacious, since without recourse to a doctor "they procure help for themselves against evil things through the various acts of piety".[72] In this instance Allatios seems to share in the popular enthusiasm for anointing with holy oil. Allatios' acceptance and even approval of popular unction is thrown into relief when his treatment of this topic is compared with his discussion of other popular methods of healing. From his text it is clear that amulets and exorcism also play a role in lay healing but his examination of these practices is far less detailed than his discussion of unction. He quickly passes over the apotropaic effects ascribed to amulets. Some use garlic, he writes:

> others [use] red coral and other things which I need not itemise individually. Yet others conduct themselves more piously since they place the cross of the Lord or his image near the child.[73]

He then moves on to discuss these pious practices, namely unction, in more detail. His coverage of amulets is less cursory if the treat-

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[71] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, pp. 121–22; Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chs. 58–59, p. 294.
[72] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 119.
[73] Ibid., IV, p. 118.

ment of the *gello* exorcism is included. The exorcism ritual has the same effect as an amulet and Allatios groups this together with the 'talismans and amulets', for the prayers contained within the tale ward off the *gello*.[74] Whoever possesses the prayer will be safe from attack for the creature will not be able to enter any house in which the prayer is placed. Although the exorcism texts themselves are long, Allatios' comments do not expand or add anything to explain the practice. He views exorcisms as 'absurdities' and includes them in his letter for their humorous value. Their stupidity will make Zacchias laugh.[75]

Allatios then moves on to attack those 'silly men', who peddle talismans and exorcisms, and sketches a caricature of false piety. These men, he says, put on a show of humility, drawing back to let others pass, bowing their heads and murmuring to themselves. When such a man becomes aware of others watching, he retires to a church and remains there, only leaving when he is exhausted, or rather because there is no longer anyone there to see him.[76] He speaks to anyone who will listen of his close relationship with God and the power of his prayers. His actions too are well judged to increase his reputation for holiness. He emphasises his power to help people, listing those to whom he has brought fortune, and the amulets he possesses which can heal illnesses of all kinds. He knows well that "the pious man and friend of the destitute is necessary on other occasions but is particularly necessary at this point in time, when disasters rush in from all sides."[77] He is careful to remind his witnesses that although he acts without hope of reward, often he is showered with gifts. He must therefore be sparing with his powers, not wishing to be thought mercenary or to call his holiness into question. Consequently he must curtail his beneficence, caring for the spiritual ills alone, rather than the physical. Unfortunately, "rather than supporting others, he first uses others to support himself" but the people he ministers to are unaware of his duplicity.[78]

This dishevelled character bears some resemblance to the travelling monks who were a feature of life in the seventeenth-century

[74] Ibid., VII, p. 126.
[75] Ibid., VII, p. 136.
[76] Ibid., VIII, p. 137.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

Ottoman Empire. The monasteries of Mount Athos and elsewhere sent out messengers with wares to collect alms from the outside world. This practice continued into the nineteenth century, and the account provided by the traveller Pashley closely corresponds to that given by Allatios. He described one such monk in these terms:

> His dress consisted of a single coarse garment, under which he wore an iron chain . . . he was regarded as a man sent by God, (he professed a divine mission). . . . His fare was most simple. . . . He professed not to receive any money from his hearers: nevertheless, at the end of his discourse, he used to tell the people, that although his reward was not of this world, still he had left a poor monastery on the Holy Mountain, where six hundred *kalógheri* were praying and fasting, daily and hourly, for the sins of a wicked world.[79]

Pashley also met a second monk carrying a case of relics through the land in order to obtain alms for his monastery.[80] According to Rycaut, these monks were called *apandochoi* and they spent five years abroad before returning home but the archbishop of Samos, Georgirenes, relates that they were only abroad for two to three years.[81] They were supposed to obtain permission from the metropolitan before seeking alms in his diocese but not all monks were quite so obedient.[82] There is a story related by a number of different travellers that may or may not have a basis in fact. A certain monk set out with permission to collect alms for a convent of nuns which fell under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch. Unaware of the boundaries of the jurisdiction, he continued to Jerusalem, where, having amassed a considerable sum, he decided to continue to Tripoli and then proceed to Europe via Constantinople. At this point he was apprehended by two of the patriarch's men and forcibly returned home.[83] Even if the tale is not true it suggests that the Orthodox church had difficulty in controlling wandering monks.

It is perhaps significant that Allatios introduces peripatetic healers and holy men in the context of exorcism, for he describes them in terms reminiscent of the travelling exorcists and preachers of the

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[79] Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 237–38.
[80] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 122.
[81] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 212.
[82] Georgirenes, *Description*, pp. 99–100.
[83] Du Bruyn, *Voyage*, p. 100. This is excerpted from Grelot's work. See Grelot, *Late Voyage to Constantinople*, p. 44 ff. The fact that du Bruyn quotes from it suggests that it clarifies and explains his own experience.

West. These men could capture an audience with their preaching and pious pretence.[84] In the West, as in the East, the appearance of piety was central to their power. Unlike the sacraments which were dependent upon the office of the individual, the efficacy of exorcism relied upon the individual's power over the demons he commanded.[85] This in turn rested upon his closeness to God, which gave him strength in the struggle against Satan. The western church of the post-Reformation period was extremely suspicious of popular exorcists. Bishops attempted to enforce clerical residency and those who left their posts to wander the roads were punished severely. Many exorcists fell into this category. Moreover, the Catholic church felt a need to lay down clearly who might practise exorcism and which rituals were legitimate. Performance of 'false' exorcisms by unlicensed men could do more harm than good: they could cause the devil to enter a body or strengthen his position there rather than expelling him. Therefore the authorities tried to restrict the practice of exorcism to priests who had been licensed by the bishop to ensure that only the canonical rituals were performed.[86] The sensitivity surrounding exorcism in the West might suggest why Allatios does not provide any more detailed information concerning Orthodox rituals.

Allatios' treatment of exorcism and popular healers stands in contrast to his approval of popular unction. His discussion removes popular unction from the context of popular healing, separating it out from practices such as popular exorcism and use of amulets. While he dismisses other forms of healing as 'laughable', unction, he believes, points to "the manifest piety which still shines forth in the Greek nation".[87] However in his division of popular experience into acceptable and unacceptable practices Allatios diverges from the outlook of the people, who sought out both kinds of remedies. His understanding of healing practices is framed in terms of complicated mystical theology. He uses the official understanding of unction to explain the enthusiasm for ἀπομύρωμα (*apomyroma*), the name given to the water which has been used to wash the chalice after the celebration of mass. The water is then collected and distributed to children and

[84] Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 118.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 109; Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 212.
[87] Allatios, *De opin.* ch. VI, p. 125.

invalids who drink it for its health-giving properties. In typical fashion, Allatios provides an etymological analysis of the word.[88] He argues that ἀπομύρωμα literally means "the washing after the True Unction which is Christ".[89] Christ is the True Unction or Myrrh, as described by Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite, and has a presence in the Eucharist. Therefore 'ἀπομύρωμα' is the water used for washing the chalice after (*apo*) the true unction (*myrrh*), that is, after the celebration of the Eucharist.

Allatios comprehends the efficacy of the practice in terms of the connection which it establishes with the divine. He bases his explanation on a difficult passage from Pseudo Dionysios.[90] In fact, Dionysios wrote not about the anointing of the sick, but the chrism of baptism and the anointing of the dead. However, his work *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is appealed to for the efficacy of the sacrament of unction. Dionysios uses the 'language of sense perception' to describe the contact between the mind of human beings and the divine. Jesus is:

> the rich source from which the divine fragrances are obtained, and very divine fragrances in divine proportions are poured into the intellects which have a special affinity with the Divinity.[91]

'Fragrance' refers both to the fragrance of the oil and symbolically to the infusion of the spirit, and creates a link between the anointing and Christ. The anointing both symbolically and actually establishes contact with the divinity. It acts as a channel for the divinity to flow through and forges a connection between "the initiates and the spirit of the Deity."[92] The consecrated oil confers the blessing on the one anointed and allows the spirit of God to enter him/her. Unction thus bestows the grace of Christ on the anointed. Moreover,

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[88] Compare the etymological expositions of Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 142, for the *vrykolakas*; ch. XXIX, p. 176 for the caterpillar.

[89] Ibid., VI, p. 124. In the Old Testament anointing was often associated with the anointing of kings. Additionally, it conferred on the one anointed the special favour of God. Christ, as Son of God and King of Heaven and Earth, was the Anointed One par excellence. In fact, the name Christ or *Christos* literally means 'the Anointed One'. It is derived from *Chrisma* or anointing. Messiah too has the same meaning, coming from the Hebrew '*Mesach*.'

[90] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124.

[91] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 125; Pseudo Dionysios, *Corpus Dionysiacum*, [480 A] 4.4, p. 99.

[92] Pseudo Dionysios, *Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 2, [480 A] 4.4, p. 99; translation from Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite, 'The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy' in *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (London, 1987), p. 229.

Christ himself was the essence of the anointing, the true unction. This meaning comes through in 1 John 2:27:

> But as for you, the initiation [lit. anointing chrism] which you received from him stays with you: you need no other teacher, but learn all you need to know from his initiation, which is real and no illusion. As he taught you, then, dwell in him.

The anointing by Christ allows his holy spirit to pour into the soul of the individual and guide his/her future life as a true Christian. Although Allatios refers to the extract from Dionysios the Areopagite in the context of ἀπομύρωμα, the text refers to the practice of unction as a whole.

For other writers ἀπομύρωμα has a different meaning. Rycaut describes it as a form of anointing with oil, which is very similar to the sacrament of unction:

> this Sacrament, as they call it, of the Holy Oyl, is by some said to be different from that which is called Ἀπομύρισμον, which is administred unto healthful persons, who are fallen into mortal sins, which pollute the Body as well as the Soul, and takes its Original from the parable of the good Samaritan in the Gospel, who poured Oyl [myrrh] into the Wounds of him who fell amongst Thieves.[93]

Rycaut distinguishes it from the sacrament of unction but it retains a close association with the practice of anointing. As in the sacrament, the healing elements are emphasised by the connection to the story of the Good Samaritan, one of the few biblical stories where oil is used for medical purposes.

There are still other definitions of ἀπομύρωμα, indicating the range of practices it could refer to. In Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon* the word merely refers to holy oil with healing properties. The word is also used for the fragrant fluid which is believed to exude from the relics of distinguished saints, such as that from the body of St Demetrios, mentioned by Allatios.[94] He writes that all should be anointed with oil from the lamp at the vigil office "on the 26th of October on the festival of St Demetrios if the unguent which flows from his body does not suffice. If it is present then let the brothers be anointed with it".[95] In all cases, however, it is linked to practices surrounding

[93] Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 267.
[94] Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. 'ἀπομύρωμα'.
[95] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 119; *Τὸ παρὸν τυπικόν*, ch. 13, p. 18v.

unction. Although there are many applications of the word, all of them refer to unction and the healing which it provides. Once again popular religion blurs the distinction between different ecclesiastical practices.

In his treatment of popular healing, Allatios places ecclesiastical ceremonies, sacramentals (involving both oil and water) and popular practices in the same framework, underpinned by the explanation provided by Dionysios the Areopagite. He does not, however, relate popular practices to the sacrament. This is surprising because he clearly considers popular anointing as a whole as acceptable and consistent with the doctrine of the church. Not only are popular practices explained in terms of theological doctrine, but some of Allatios' extracts relating to anointing, such as a passage describing the anointing of faces following particular vigil services, the Washing of the Altar, and the Washing of the Feet, are all taken from the liturgical *Typikon*, the 'basic rule book' for worship in the Orthodox church.[96] It guides the priest through the conflicting liturgical rubric provided in the books dealing with the different prescriptions for daily worship — the Menaion, which provides the services for the saints' days on each day of the year, the Pentekostarion which provides orders for the Paschal season, and the Oktoechos, which provides the rubric for the worship for each day of the week.[97]

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[96] Alexander Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. A.E. Moorhouse (London, 1966), p. 16.

[97] John Klentos, 'The Typology of the *Typikon* as a Liturgical Document' in Margaret Mullet and Anthony Kirby (eds.) *Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism*, (Belfast, 1994), p. 296; Robert Taft, 'Mount Athos: a Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988), 180. Liturgical *typika* are not the same as monastic *typika*, which set down the rules for a monastic community. However, they were influenced by the development of monastic *typika*. The title page of the seventeenth-century *Typikon* states that it is the *typikon* of St Sabas but the work is not identical to the sixth-century *typikon* of the same name, nor was its force limited to the monastic sphere. It is the amalgamation of material brought by the Palestinian monks who had fled from Jerusalem in the seventh century and documents written for Stoudite foundations in the ninth and tenth centuries. This synthesis, called the Neo-Sabaite *Typikon* by Taft, appeared in Constantinople around the thirteenth century and was introduced across the whole church by Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos (1353–1354; 1364–1376). Henceforth it provided the outline for ecclesiastical as well as monastic worship and it still forms the basis of the Byzantine office today. Allatios' extracts are probably taken from one of the many editions of this text published in Venice in the early modern period. See *Τὸ παρὸν τυπικόν* (Venice, 1615), p. 1; For the development of this *typikon* see Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: the Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1986), pp. 273–91;

Given Allatios' citation of a wide variety of ecclesiastical ceremonies that are important in popular unction, it is surprising that he never discusses the place of the sacrament in popular healing practices. This is not because he ignores the role of the sacraments in popular religion. In his discussion of the *gello*, as we have seen, he stresses the efficacy of baptism against her devouring instincts. His omission here is even more remarkable given the fact that two of his extracts from the *Typikon* — the washing of the holy altar in the service for the sixth hour and the ceremony of *Nipter* or the Washing of the Feet — come from the liturgical rubric for Great Thursday, one of the two days on which unction could be celebrated.[98]

Allatios cannot have been unfamiliar with the context of these extracts from the *Typikon*. He knew the text well and also refers to it in his work on the books of the Orthodox church, *De libris ecclesiasticis Graecorum*, where he discusses it in more detail.[99] Moreover, as an ecumenist and expert on the rites of the Orthodox church, he would have had a good understanding of the sacramental positions of both eastern and western churches. His compatriot and fellow Catholic, Petrus Arcudius had written a work on this subject, the title of which amply demonstrates his ecumenical standpoint: *De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis in septem sacramentorum administratione*. Amongst other issues it dealt with the sacrament of unction.[100] Allatios was also aware of this work and cites it in his *De opinationibus*.[101] However, he chooses not to stress the ecclesiastical context of the two extracts from the *Typikon* and, in this case, passes over the role of the sacrament in the lives of the laity.

One reason for Allatios' omission lies in his focus on the practice of anointing in contrast to the strong emphasis on repentance which appears in both the Orthodox and Catholic sacraments. None of Allatios' extracts associates the healing of the body with the forgiveness of sins that is so important for the Orthodox sacrament. In

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Taft, 'Mount Athos', 179–94; Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: a Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1995), p. 273. On its current usage see Taft, *Hours*, p. 283; On the editions of the book in the sixteenth century see Layton, *Greek Book*, pp. 153–54.

[98] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124; *Τὸ παρὸν τυπικόν*, ch. 41, p. 82r; ch. 42, p. 83r.

[99] Leo Allatios, *De libris ecclesiasticis Graecorum, dissertationes et observationes variae* (Paris, 1646), pp. 4–15.

[100] Arcudius, *De concordia*, II: De Extrema Unctione, liber quintus, p. 378 ff.

[101] Allatios, *De opin.* XXX, p. 181.

the Catholic sacrament of final unction the emphasis also falls on forgiveness of sins, but here there is no stress on the concomitant therapy for the body. In Catholicism the two consequences of unction — forgiveness of sin and physical healing — were not connected in the same way as in Orthodoxy. The sacrament of the Orthodox church looks towards a new, healthier life in body as well as soul. In the Catholic church the healing of sin does not have the effect of healing the body. Instead, as the Council of Trent stated, it:

> comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by arousing in him great trust in the divine mercy; supported by this the sick person bears more lightly the inconveniences and trials of his illness, and resists more easily the temptations of the devil who lies in wait for his heel; and sometimes he regains bodily health when it is expedient for the salvation of his soul.[102]

For the Catholic church, in final unction, as the name suggests, forgiveness of sin was primarily considered in terms of preparation for the afterlife rather than as an essential part of the healing process. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Catholic church had modified its earlier position. Now unction was also allowed to those who were seriously ill as well as those on the point of death. Nevertheless, the main emphasis continued to be on death and the dying. Perhaps Allatios, as a Catholic, associated the sacrament of unction more closely with spiritual rather than physical therapy and did not appreciate its place in bodily healing.

The existence of theological differences over the sacrament between the two churches may also explain why Allatios does not explicitly link the popular practices of unction to the Orthodox sacrament. In the *De opinationibus*, popular unction is the strongest example of the piety of the Greeks. It is explicitly contrasted with less acceptable practices, and is used to emphasise the true religious nature of the Orthodox population. It demonstrates that the Orthodox population is not entirely stuck in the mire of 'superstition', as his exposition of the other beliefs and practices might suggest, but has remained true and faithful to its religion. Given the role popular unction plays in casting a positive light on the "beliefs of the Greeks today" it would

[102] Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: Trent to Vatican II (London, 1990), p. 710.

be unwise to dilute the effect by connecting it to a sacrament over which East and West differed.

However, Allatios has a further problem. His view of popular unction does not seem to represent the reformed Catholic position on the subject. His wholehearted endorsement of the use of holy oil and water is slightly out of step with the ambivalent attitude of the Catholic church. Following the Reformation and the Catholic Reformation, western churches tried to restrict popular use of holy substances, separating the sacred from the profane. The use of sacramentals, such as holy water and holy oil, could be accepted by the church as long as they were not used in what the church considered to be inappropriate ways.[103] While it was still accepted that miracles could be performed through anointing the sick with holy oil from the lamp, even the use of holy oil in healing practices could be viewed with suspicion.[104] A woman called before the Inquisition of Venice was accused of healing with holy water, holy oil, and Greek words, which subsequently turned out to be prayers. When asked, she denied that the oil was holy, aware that she was not supposed to be using it.[105] As this example illustrates, official Catholicism was highly suspicious of the lay manipulation of sacred material.

The Catholic church's ambivalent attitude towards the lay use of holy oil meant that Allatios did not validate Orthodox popular unction by relating it directly to Catholic doctrine, as he did in the case of other beliefs, notably in his association of the *vrykolakas* with purgatory. Instead, he uses a historical method to reveal the common origins of the practice of anointing in East and West. This was an approach which he used many times to defend the Orthodox church and demonstrate the shared history of Orthodoxy and Catholicism.[106] Here he applies the method on a much smaller scale than in his massive *De consensione*. He presents examples of anointing which come from the history of the early church, the shared history of East and West before the schism between the churches. In the fourth-century *Lausiac History*, which contains a description of early Egyptian monasticism, Macarius the Alexandrian treats a sick girl: "Commiserating

[103] Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 7.
[104] Ibid., p. 192.
[105] Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, p. 214; see also Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 101.
[106] See chapter 3, pp. 61–62; 68–69. See also Frazee, '*De ecclesiae*', 54.

[with her] with an outpouring of prayers, and anointing her with holy oil for twenty days with his own hands, he sent her back to her own city cured from evil."[107] Both the Orthodox and Catholic churches accepted the accounts of the saints and the miraculous healings performed in the past through anointing. In the *De opinationibus* excerpts from early saints' lives are followed by examples of Byzantine holy men and women, who were thus shown to be continuing in the tradition of the early church. Finally, Allatios brings the examples up to date with an illustration from his own life. He describes how he was healed after being rubbed with myrtle leaves which had previously been brushed over an icon.

As we have seen, for Allatios the practice of anointing with oil can be understood in the same way as anointing with other substances — such as water that has been in contact with holy items, or played a part in an ecclesiastical rite. While some use oil from the lamp, others use oil blessed by the saint himself, and others again "use water from the washing of the holy altar", or water charged with holiness through other rituals. With such water 'the faithful anoint themselves'. Holy water, like holy oil, is efficacious against disease. The practice of anointing using water allows Allatios to draw an analogy between eastern practices of unction and western use of holy water. He advises Zacchias:

> concerning the power of holy water against demons, and spells and various sicknesses, see many examples in the writings of Ioannes Stephanus Durand [in] *De Ritibus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, Book 1, chapter 21, number iv and following;[108] and again in Gretser *De Benedictionibus*.[109]

Thus he draws attention to the fact that the near contemporary Catholic theologians Ioannes Durandus and Jacob Gretser accepted the miraculous effects of holy water. Allatios then proceeds to give illustrations from western history to prove his point. Abbot Desiderius

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[107] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 120; Palladius, *The Lausaic History of Palladius*, ed. Cuthbert Butler (Cambridge, 1898), no. 18 p. 51.

[108] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 124; Joannes Stephanus Durand, *De ritibus ecclesiae catholicae* (Paris, 1624), I:21, pp. 135–36. It is actually no. iii which is concerned with the power of holy water over demons, spells and sicknesses. No. iv discusses the errors of heretics concerning holy water.

[109] Allatios, *De opin.* VI, p. 125; XXIV p. 174; Jacob Gretser, *Libri duo; de benedictionibus et tertius de maledictionibus* (Ingolstadt, 1615), Book 1:15 pp. 53–64; Book 2:7 pp. 89–93; 10–20 pp. 101–35; and concerning holy oil: 22–24, pp. 137–49.

of Monte Cassino, who later became Pope Victor III (1086–87) narrates in his *Dialogi* that in the city of Lucca it was rumoured that whoever had been struck down by fever should drink from the water which had run over the hands of Joannes, the holy abbot of the monastery, after the celebration of the mass. Again, the water used to wash the hands of Pope Alexander after he had celebrated mass acquired healing properties and cured a woman of her lameness.[110] By connecting current Orthodox practice of anointing with oil to the use of holy water, Allatios manages to draw the Orthodox popular unction into the accepted sphere of western practice.

Verification of Religious Healing: Allatios' Own Experience

The strongest statement of Allatios' position on popular healing comes in the description of his own experience. Allatios' presentation of unction, like other topics in the *De opinationibus*, is heavily influenced by his Catholic ecumenical approach. It enables him to show the positive side of Greek popular religion, the 'serious things' that he has mixed with 'trifles' along the way, and to associate Greek lay practice with similar acceptable customs in the Catholic church. However, such an emphasis on religious healing in the work of a qualified doctor requires some investigation into the relationship between religious and medical healing during the period. How did religious views of disease causation interact with medical analyses of illness?

Allatios' stress on the efficacy of unction stands in contrast to the natural cures prescribed by Zacchias. Moreover, Allatios' endorsement of religious healing is confirmed by his own experience of a miraculous cure, which is anchored firmly in the Byzantine tradition of religious healing. The examples which appear in chapter IV of the *De opinationibus*, and Allatios' interpretation of them, lead up to his own experience of healing, which was effected through anointing. Allatios was anointed not with oil, but with myrtle leaves which his mother had rubbed over the icon at the church. Chapter IV, however, concludes with a discussion of the substitution of holy oil

[110] Allatios, *De opin.* IV, p. 125; Pope Victor III (Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino), *Dialogi*, *PL* 149, cols. 971–72.

from the lamp with garlands of herbs which had been hung before the holy image. When used for anointing, such a garland "was also called sacred oil, although it was not oil" because of the original application of the remedy.[111] The use of herbs could be assimilated to the use of holy oil from the lamp, and could therefore be understood in the tradition of unction. Like the oil, the herbs were sanctified through contact with the icon of the saint and conferred the blessedness on to the patient. These herbs were taken home and the faithful "rub the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and breast of the invalid" with them, just as parts of the body are anointed with holy oil.[112] This was exactly what Allatios' mother did. Returning home from the church with the sanctified branch of myrtle, she rubbed Allatios' face and chest with the leaf. The action instantly restored his sense of perception. He records: "I opened my eyes, I saw, I recognised my mother who was fussing over me and I understood that health had been restored to me by the Virgin."[113]

Although Allatios' cure was instant, its miraculous nature was confirmed later that night in a vision. This part of his cure has parallels with the extract taken from Pachymeres' *Histories* concerning the miraculous cure of Emperor Michael IX, son of Andronikos II.[114] Michael had fallen ill while far from home, and his illness had defeated all the efforts of the local doctors. As well as sending the best of his own medicines, his father "always trusted entirely in the mercy of God and of his most praiseworthy mother" and, with prayers and services of thanksgiving, sent a monk carrying oil from the lamp.[115] As soon as the monk touched the shore, Michael experienced pleasant dreams in which he was healed: a well-dressed woman removed his ulcer and indicated to him the connection of this cure to the holy oil. Thus the holy oil brought about a great miracle and healed the emperor who was on the brink of death.

Allatios' illness had also defeated the doctors before his mother resorted to religious healing. He too experienced the instant effect of the holy remedy. However, despite the immediate nature of the

[111] Allatios, *De opin*, IV, p. 122.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., V, p. 123.
[114] Ibid., IV, p. 120; Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 5:10, pp. 391–92.
[115] Allatios, *De opin*, IV, p. 122.

cure, he remained in bed, unable to speak. This, as we are told, was not a defect of the cure, but necessary to it, enabling him to witness the proof of its miraculous nature. During the night he experienced a dream, or rather a vision, for he insisted that these things he had not 'heard nor dreamed' but experienced.[116] A train of beautiful women filed through the room, plucking leaves from the myrtle and the final one removed the branch altogether. Allatios was afraid that they were taking away his remedy, but was unable to call his mother until all the myrtle had been removed. Finally, recovering his voice, he summoned his mother, who reassured him that the myrtle was still in place. It was not his remedy that had been removed but his illness. Like the emperor, his healing experience included an encounter with holy figures. Whereas the beautiful woman in the emperor's dream plucked out the ulcer, in Allatios' vision the women plucked the myrtle leaves, and symbolically, and actually, removed his illness. The vision confirmed the miraculous nature of Allatios' cure, as did the dream in the healing of Michael.

Allatios' experience is therefore grounded in the Orthodox tradition. However, by providing an eyewitness account, he also verifies the truth of religious healing, stating "these are things which I have not heard, nor dreamed, but have known well and through experience I believe them to be true."[117] This is significant in the light of the scepticism directed towards religious healing by the medical profession in the West. Allatios himself is even a little defensive when he introduces the experience, for he admonishes Zacchias in Greek: "And do not laugh for I am telling you the truth".[118] Although Zacchias admitted the possibility of miraculous cures, he applied extremely strict criteria before allowing that the cure had been effected through divine intervention. This approach harmonised rather than conflicted with Zacchias' position on the Rota, the Congregation which advised on the veracity, or otherwise, of reputedly miraculous cures. Who better to witness the truth of miraculous 'supranatural' healing than those skilled in natural processes? The testimony of physicians was invaluable to the post-Tridentine church, with its strict criteria for judging miracles. Zacchias' own accounts to this effect

[116] Ibid., V, p. 124.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

are contained in the last two volumes of his *Quaestiones medicolegales*, and reveal the meticulous process the Congregation went through before a miracle was recognised as such. All possible natural processes had to be ruled out. Therefore a miraculous cure had to take place instantaneously and without any evacuation of liquid, such as a cure would require under the dictates of Galenic medicine, and it could not occur in the final stages of any sickness, as in this case the illness could have had a natural reversal.[119] Despite these strict criteria, on occasion Zacchias did acknowledge the possibility of miraculous cures; indeed this was a prerequisite for his place on the Rota.[120] In the main, however, he was extremely suspicious of supposedly miraculous healing, as Allatios' comments above suggest, and complained that doctors heard of "miraculous cures of sick people daily, or rather by the hour, even by the minute".[121]

Allatios therefore was well aware that Zacchias would view his experience critically and with amusement, associating it with the popular tradition. Given this, it is important to note the extent to which Allatios' illness narrative conformed to the requirements of post-Tridentine healing miracles. Firstly, he states that his illness was impossible for the doctors to cure. They despaired of his life, and his parents only knew he was alive from the movement of the candle flame which had been placed by his bed for this purpose. Secondly, the miracle was instantaneous. The moment the myrtle leaves touched his forehead he recovered his senses. Thirdly, he distances the event from the possibility of a natural cure. There was no evacuation of substances and he asserts that his cure could not have occurred through bodily strength because of his continuing weakness after the illness:

> Wherefore, like children who are unable to move by themselves, I wrapped a bandage around my waist and, hanging on to it, I tried to walk until it was made plain to all that my health was restored, not by the strength of human nature but by the kindness of the blessed Virgin.[122]

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[119] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv tit. 1 q. 8, pp. 306–08; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 187.

[120] See Simon Ditchfield 'How Not to be a Counter Reformation Saint: the Attempted Canonization of Pope Gregory X, 1622–45', *Papers of the British School at Rome* New Series 47 (1992), 397–98, for a discussion of one of his cases.

[121] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv tit. 1 q. 8, p. 306; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 187.

[122] Allatios, *De opin.* V, p. 124.

At first sight this reasoning seems very strange. Surely if the cure was miraculous it should be complete. The signs of weakness following the illness indicate to us a natural rather than divine cure. Allatios' cure must, however, be seen in the light of early modern expectations of disease and sickness, rather than those of the twenty-first century. Allatios' statement emphasises the weakness of the human body, which reveals its inability to fight off the disease on its own. This is contrasted to the power of the Virgin Mary to act as an intercessor. Despite his continuing weakness after the miracle, Allatios stresses the completeness of his cure. This was important because miracles were often acknowledged to have occurred by the 'uneducated' laity even when only a mitigation of the symptoms occurred.[123] Therefore, although Allatios' experience was presented as consistent with the Byzantine tradition, it also conforms to the western requirements for a miraculous cure.

These pious healing rituals provide a counter-balance to Allatios' presentation of the more 'superstitious' beliefs of the Greeks today. As we have seen, the western church took a very strict view on 'superstitions', including the kind of subjects that Allatios touched upon. When talking about popular religion, Allatios trod a fine line between revealing Greek beliefs to a western audience and bringing down condemnation on the Greeks for their superstition and irreligious practices. His professed aim in the *De opinationibus* was to present the 'delusions' of the people, but, at the same time, he had to take care not to present the Greeks as a people completely given over to superstition and barely Christian in their practices. Indeed, this is a view which often comes across from contemporary writers. Missionaries too had to deal with the problems that this view caused. After describing how two Greeks were martyred for their faith, one missionary stressed that these examples showed that the land of Greece was in no way as spiritually sterile as it was believed to be in France, and that he had found it very fertile.[124] It is useful to bear in mind that one function of the Jesuit reports was to secure further financial support for the mission. It had to be demonstrated that it was a worthwhile enterprise.[125] In the same way, it was especially

[123] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv tit. 1 q. 8, p. 306; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 186.
[124] Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 71.
[125] Ibid., p. 297.

important for Allatios to present a positive view of Greek piety given the suspicious attitude of the papacy towards Greek rites during this period.[126] Even in a text on popular religion, Allatios seized the opportunity to promote his ecumenical perspective.

Allatios therefore presents a sympathetic account of Greek popular practices of unction and sees them as consistent with his own Catholicism. The account of his personal experience states categorically the efficacy of religious healing and the relevance of healing miracles in his own time. In this he is at one with the popular conception, but in accepting the efficacy of religious healing he comes into conflict with certain scientific trends. The relationship between Allatios' intellectual views and his account of popular beliefs is the subject of the final chapter.

[126] See chapter 3 above, n. pp. 62–63. See also Allatios, *De consens.*, 3.9, cols. 1048–51; 3:10, cols. 1057–59.

CHAPTER TEN

ALLATIOS AND THE *STOICHEION*

The previous chapters have explored the influence of Allatios' ecumenical views on the selection and interpretation of his material. It remains to consider the ways in which the *De opinationibus* is related to the medical sphere and to investigate what the text reveals about Allatios' approach to healing. It seems peculiar to us that a letter on popular beliefs would have resonance in the medical field. Indeed, scientists and doctors of the seventeenth-century West were involved in enterprises which were to bring about radical changes in the understanding of the world, with the slow separation of natural philosophy from magic and religion and the eventual subordination of the latter to the laws of nature. The 'trifles' that Allatios discusses in his text do not seem to be in harmony with this development. Nevertheless, the *De opinationibus* was written to one of the leading physicians of the age, and we should not forget that although Allatios' ecclesiastical works came to the fore in his later life, he had trained as a doctor and remained in contact with medical circles.

The relationship between medicine and religion in Italy at the outset of the scientific revolution was not identical to that of today. Rather than speaking of a complete division of theology and nature during this period, it is better to think in terms of a gradual separation, and to remember that the categories 'natural' and 'supernatural', 'rational' and 'irrational' do not correspond to twenty-first-century classifications. As Peter Burke points out:

> Our modern distinctions (between rational and irrational, natural and supernatural, religious and superstitious), were in the process of formation during the period; to apply them to the years before 1650, in particular, is to invite misunderstanding.[1]

Despite this warning, it is clear that in the period before 1650 such distinctions were not altogether absent. Like other doctors, Zacchias had to identify which diseases had been caused by demons and which

[1] Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, p. 218.

had been contracted naturally.[2] In his discussion of impotence he outlines how a doctor could assess whether the root of the affliction was natural or demonic. Witchcraft was very difficult to identify. Only if the usual symptoms and reaction to treatment were lacking and no natural causes could be detected would *maleficia* be diagnosed.[3] Thus the characterisation of a disease as natural or supernatural in origin affected the kind of treatment offered. If the disease was demonic in origin, only a religious cure had the power to deal with the cause. If the cause of the affliction was 'natural', it could be treated with medicines derived from the natural world. For both doctor and patient the distinction between natural and supernatural was therefore highly significant.

The distinction between natural and supernatural healers does not necessarily imply a radical difference in the remedies they used.[4] The same medicines were used by a wide range of healers. The efficacy of earth from Malta and Lemnos against snakebite was widely known and supported by the classical author Dioscorides, whose works provided an impetus to the development of the new chemical medicine during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[5] It was also used by other sectors of the medical community, such as Jesuit missionaries and charlatans.[6] Thus a strict line cannot be drawn between the actions of doctors and priests, and their cures cannot be mapped on to the categories of rational and irrational medicine respectively.

Moreover, many treatments viewed as 'natural' remedies during this period would no longer be regarded as such. As well as diagnosing from Galenic principles, doctors could use astrological charts to identify the cause of sickness. The patient did not even need to be present: as long as the doctor knew the date of birth to the hour, he could cast their horoscope and divine the origin of their discomfort.[7] Similarly, popular herbal remedies cannot necessarily be

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[2] Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 193.

[3] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iii tit. i q.v, p. 229 ff.; Joseph Bajada, *Sexual Impotence: the Contribution of Paolo Zacchia (1584–1659)* (Rome, 1988), p. 120.

[4] Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, p. 213.

[5] Richard Palmer, 'Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century' in A. Wear, R.K. French and I.M. Lonie (eds.), *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 100; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 107.

[6] Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 246; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 246.

[7] Genevieve Miller, 'A Seventeenth-Century Astrological Diagnosis' in Charles S. Singleton (ed.), *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1968), 27–33.

categorised as 'natural' in today's sense of the word. The eighteenth-century traveller, Sonnini, describes how the herb satyrion was used by the Greek population both to cure tetters (pustular skin eruptions) and to keep teeth white and strong. When the shoots first appeared, he was told, you should throw yourself on the ground and bite the sprouting stem, the whiteness of which would the benefit the teeth. From his Enlightenment perspective, Sonnini can write of the practices of Greek peasants that "where superstition is always by the side of reality, people are not contented with properties confirmed by reason and experience, but seek imaginary ones".[8] No such division existed in the minds of those practising these cures. They were merely making use of the correspondences between worldly things. The whiteness of the stem indicated a connection to the teeth, and imparted its whiteness and toughness to them.[9]

The early modern categories of 'natural' and 'supernatural' therefore do not correspond to our own. The concepts overlapped and interacted in a way that they do not today, but, if the sense in which contemporaries used them is kept in mind, they can still be useful distinctions to make. After all, the concepts were highly significant during the period. As we have seen, the classification of an illness as 'natural' or 'supernatural' determined the appropriate course of treatment, and consequently the type of healer, clerical or medical, who would carry it out.

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[8] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 273.

[9] Similar correspondences are revealed in the magico-medical text of the *Kyranides*. This text exerted a strong influence on Byzantine medical treatises. In the twelfth-century text discussed by Congourdeau references to these kinds of correspondences can be found in almost a third of its chapters. Not everyone classified such texts as medical, however. Possession of the *Kyranides* played an important role in the conviction of a physician during the fourteenth-century patriarchal investigations into the practice of sorcery. The book was found in the doctor's house, along with texts of Hippocrates and Galen. The church took his ownership of the work to indicate guilt because they classified the book as a magical rather than a medical text, and in this they were backed up by their expert witness. Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, '"Mètrodôra" et son oeuvre' in Evelyne Patlagean (ed.), *Maladie et Société à Byzance* (Spoleto, 1993), pp. 57–96; Miklosich, *Acta*, vol. 2, p. 343 ff.; Cupane, 'magia', 253. On the *Kyranides* see D. Kaimakes, *Die Kyraniden* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976); A. Delatte, *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides*, Fasc. XCII (Paris, 1942); Fernand Dusaussay de Mely, *Les Lapidaires de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1896–1902).

Allatios' Text and its Medical Context

In his letter on popular religion, Allatios wishes to avoid well-trodden ground, especially those areas covered by Zacchias, but at the same time he has to offer something that catches the attention of his addressee. Even though the theme of popular beliefs does not seem compatible with Zacchias' interest in forensic medicine, many of Allatios' topics refer back to issues which the papal physician had explored in his *Quaestiones Medicolegales*. Allatios' commentary reveals his awareness of Zacchias' treatment of relevant matters. Allatios recounts how the *gello* kills children both by sucking their blood and by merely touching them. The *vrykolakas*, a more deadly creature, "does not kill only with words and by contact, but destroys with his gaze and appearance alone."[10] These descriptions are in accord with those used by Zacchias in his examination of poisoning, where he explains how a toxin can take effect through gaze, touch or words.[11] Allatios and Zacchias may appear to be investigating two different subjects — Allatios the action of demons, and Zacchias poisons — but in the West the idea of poisoning was still closely bound up with demonic action. Indeed, Zacchias asserts that poisoning can occur either when a deadly substance is applied, or through the work of demons.[12] Poison was believed to work in the same way as spells and some doctors even believed that demons could be introduced into the body through its application.[13] The similarity of approach in the work of Allatios and Zacchias is clearest in their treatment of *lamies* and *gelloudes*, creatures which were very closely associated. When Zacchias came to consider the *lamia*, he insisted that she killed her victims with poison.[14] Allatios uses the same language in his observation on the *gello* for he states that she 'poisons' her victims through contact.[15]

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[10] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 143.
[11] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. II tit. ii q. 13, nos. 1–3, pp. 188–89.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 103.
[14] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. II tit. i q. xvii, p. 150.
[15] Allatios, *De opin.* II, p. 116. In fact in his first chapter Allatios says that it had been his intention to write about poisoners: I, p. 115. For another example of demons working through poison see IV, p. 118, where garlic and coral are used to protect against poisoning, again in the context of young children.

Further connections to the work of Zacchias can be seen in Allatios' comparison of corpses preserved by demons and bodies of saints preserved by God. For Zacchias the defining difference is that the corpses preserved by God are conserved whole and entire as if the body was still alive.[16] This is exactly the description Allatios provides of Greek saints: corpses "of the pious rest in the same condition as when they were alive and are greatly to be revered for their appearance and beauty."[17] Zacchias' enquiry into these issues confirms their relevance to the medical field during the seventeenth century. Doctors had to understand the workings of demons because they had to distinguish between naturally and supernaturally caused diseases. Despite Allatios' subject matter, he was not isolated from the medical sphere for he linked his discussions of demonic illness to Zacchias' text, and so to a wider field of medical interest.

Nevertheless, it is still curious to find such an emphasis on the demonic causes of disease and religious healing in a work written by a trained physician. Perhaps Allatios' focus reflects the lack of professional medical care in the East where there were very few doctors, particularly in rural communities. When Allatios comments on the therapeutic use of holy water and oil by the faithful he notes that "without any doctor, they devise a remedy for illness in this way", suggesting that the laity had to rely on remedies of their own making. Similarly, we are told that on the island of Andros "they have neither physician nor Chyrugen but, when they fall sick, take themselves to the Mercy of God."[18] Allatios himself had expressed a desire to become a doctor in order to help the people of Chios, suggesting a need for ready medical care on that island too.[19]

As the seventeenth century progressed there were reports of eastern physicians, usually from wealthy Greek or Italian families, who returned to their homeland to practise medicine after completing their studies in the West. Tournefort records that "the physicians, all over the Levant, are generally Jews or Natives of Candia, old Nurselings of Padua."[20] Travellers pronounced the level of treatment

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[16] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. IV tit. i q. X, pp. 320–21.
[17] Allatios, *De opin.* XVIII, p. 158.
[18] Thevenot, *Travels*, pt 1, p. 16. Note that mercy or 'ἔλεος' was another name for the holy oil used in unction. See chapter 9 pp. 248–49 above.
[19] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 62.
[20] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 133.

very low, even compared to contemporary western standards. The French traveller and doctor, Jacob Spon, noted the lack of medical knowledge in the Ottoman Empire and Tournefort too was scornful of the ignorance of physicians he met outside Constantinople.[21] Western advances in the art of healing did not spread quickly to the East for the skills and information acquired by visiting students did not enter the corpus of Ottoman medicine for another century.[22] Even respected doctors, such as Alexander Mavrocordato, a Chian who rose to prominence as the personal physician of the Grand Vizier, did not use their influential positions to pass on their learning. While resident in the West, Mavrocordato had written a treatise on the function of the lungs in the circulation of the blood (1664), which discussed Harvey's theories on circulation. It appears that he never returned to the subject after securing his post at the Ottoman court.

However, assessments by western doctors and travellers of the quality of Greek medicine should be treated with care. Compared to medicine today, the western approach was equally inadequate. The regimes of fasting and purging prescribed by the 'Nurselings of Padua' reduced the Orthodox population to "Skin and Bones, and they are whole Years in recovering".[23] The cure was often more enervating than the disease. For this reason the chief physician at the Porte inspected foreign doctors before providing them with a licence. He was particularly wary of the new chemical medicine, "whose adverse effects exceeded any benefit to be had". Such was the suspicion of their drugs that if a patient died, his doctor was forced to take a dose of his own medicine![24] This was an understandable precaution given the use of highly poisonous substances in medicines. Paracelsus, for example, had advocated mercury to clarify the spleen.[25] Even in the nineteenth century, western medicine could be life threatening: struck by the number of Italian doctors passing through the Porte, the Venetian ambassador remarked that "the serene republic had not lost its taste for crusades, as by means of its physicians it carried on a constant war against the infidels."[26]

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[21] Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, pp. 31–32.
[22] G.A. Russell, 'Physicians at the Ottoman Court', *Medical History* 34:3 (1990), 259.
[23] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 133.
[24] Russell, 'Physicians', 265–56.
[25] Brooke, *Science*, p. 69.
[26] Pouqueville, *Travels in Greece*, p. 194.

There was also hostility to medicine from a different quarter. Sometimes competition or antagonism arose between the various practitioners and their approaches to disease. Spon came across a man who refused the offer of medical treatment for his wife, saying it would be of no use because the disease was not natural but caused by the local fairies.[27] Similarly, in a near contemporary exorcism text, the exorcist advised the patient against seeking a different kind of therapy, warning that often the demon would try to persuade his host that the disease was natural rather than supernatural.[28] The exorcist cautioned that natural remedies would have no effect and allow the demon to remain in residence.

This 'either/or' situation regarding medical and religious cures is not borne out by the practice of the laity, as the extract from the Byzantine historian Pachymeres reveals. When the co-emperor Michael IX Palaiologos was mortally sick, his father Andronikos II sent the best of his own drugs as well as offering prayers, thanksgiving services and sending holy oil.[29] Although the account stresses religious healing and the miraculous nature of the cure, it does not reject the medical profession and its remedies. The focus of the tale merely serves to emphasise the piety of the imperial family and their underlying reliance on religious healing. In the seventeenth century too, the laity made the best use of the resources at hand. In 1655 the wife of a certain Sieur Nicolo Foustieri was suffering a difficult childbirth and had been in labour for three days. Foustieri went to the Jesuits who said that they had no natural remedies which would help her situation. The man then demanded the relics of St Ignatius of Loyola — obviously the missionaries had already informed him of their power. The Catholic priest replied that they only served those who were devoted to the saint. Foustieri promptly converted to Catholicism and took the relics to his wife. The child was delivered safely and given the name Ignatios after the saint who had saved him.[30]

The Jesuits were famed for their medicine chests and Foustieri had clearly visited the Jesuits looking for natural medicine.[31] When

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[27] Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, p. 31.

[28] Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 102.

[29] Allatios, *De opin.* IV p. 121; Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 5:10 pp. 391–92.

[30] Richard, *Relation*, p. 402. Compare the actions of the Jesuits in Germany where relics of Ignatius Loyola were particularly associated with women in labour and were handed out to aid difficult births. Johnson, 'Blood', p. 198.

[31] In Germany people often sought out the Jesuits for their medical skills rather than their evangelism. Johnson, 'Blood', p. 199.

this was refused, he accepted the offer of relics instead, even though it meant converting to Catholicism. From the viewpoint of the patient and his/her family, the Jesuits merely represented another source of healing, albeit the last one approached, perhaps because of the religious implications. Moreover, if we look again at the exorcism text, although in one place it rejects any appeal to medical remedies as demonically inspired, elsewhere it provides a natural remedy for epilepsy, the most infamous of possession-caused diseases.[32] Again, in Spon's account of the husband who refused medical treatment for his wife, the man's attitude is not necessarily the result of a dogmatic rejection of medicine. Spon attributes it to a lack of affection within the marriage, writing that the husband shed more tears over the loss of money for his wife's burial than for the loss of his wife herself.[33]

If Allatios' exclusive concentration on religious healing is not a reflection of popular attitudes, neither does it mirror the focus of other western writers. Many western travellers acknowledged the herbal lore of the Greek people and were greatly interested in the cures they provided and the herbs they used.[34] In botany and pharmacy, as in other areas, the classical authors had transmitted a wealth of information to the early modern scholar. Careful study of these works in the sixteenth century had highlighted the need to identify the flora used in classical recipes before the remedies could be reproduced successfully. Different plants could bear the same names and travel in the lands of the classical authors was essential to identify the required species.[35] Some botanists believed that the peasantry preserved efficacious remedies known to the ancient writers and therefore that ancient wisdom could be recovered by observing and questioning those who still used the plants. Tournefort argued the 'common people' preserved the names of "many a Plant, well known to those learned Greeks, who lived in more enlighten'd happier Times".[36] If the Greeks retained the names used by classical writers such as Theophrastus and Dioscorides, it would be possible to discover the correct species for famous but elusive universal cures, such as mithri-

[32] Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 103.
[33] Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, p. 32.
[34] Sonnini, *Travels*, vol. 2 pp. 142–48.
[35] Palmer, 'Pharmacy', p, 110.
[36] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 68.

datum. Paradoxically the rejection of classical authorities, such as Hippocrates and Galen, also led to a greater interest in the popular use of herbs. Doctors interested in the new chemical medicines, who wished to discover the properties of plants and minerals beyond those described by the ancients, started to pay attention to traditional herbal remedies. The Paracelsian Fioravanti regarded travel and questioning of the people as the best way to learn the value of herbs.[37]

The search for plants abroad was given impetus by the increasing demand for supplies of plants to stock botanical gardens and pharmacies.[38] Many travellers, such as Tournefort and Wheler, were extremely interested in the flora of the East. In his preface, George Wheler, who travelled with Spon, anticipates complaints from those who will ask, "why does he treat us with insipid descriptions of Weeds, and make us hobble after him over broken stones, decayed buildings, and old rubbish?"[39] As might be expected from a practising botanist, Tournefort details the eastern species he comes across, describing the leaves, the habitat, the smell and taste of the plants, and, where possible, associates them with western specimens he had collected earlier in his career.[40] Western writers therefore acknowledged and recorded local herbal knowledge rather than concentrating on religious healing practices.

Thus neither the lack of physicians nor the climate of western interest can explain Allatios' concentration on religious forms of healing. Professional medical treatment was not the only alternative to a religious cure and there was a wider range of healing than Allatios' text would suggest. Nor can it be argued convincingly that Allatios was ignorant of the developments in western medicine. He had links with botanist circles, demonstrated in his correspondence with the Paduan botanist, Carlo Avanzi and also had experience of the new chemical approach to medicine.[41] However, one of Allatios' letters to Avanzi and another to Moreau, indicate a certain amount of hostility towards medical practice. It stemmed from a certain event he

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[37] Palmer, 'Pharmacy', p. 113.

[38] Ibid., pp. 106–107; 102–103.

[39] Wheler, *Journey into Greece*, preface.

[40] Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, pp. 178–80; 185–86 et passim. *Corollarium Institutionum Rei Herbariae*, (London, 1686), vol. 1, no. 21.

[41] This was the same Avanzi or Avantius who sent Allatios a manuscript of the *gello* exorcism. I would like to thank Thomas Cerbu for confirming this.

witnessed. One evening when in the company of friends he observed a fellow doctor writing a prescription while under the influence of alcohol. Noticing that the ingredients were highly toxic and likely to do more harm than good, he managed to take the prescription from the patient, and thus saved his life.[42]

Allatios did not reject medicine completely, however. After he qualified as a doctor he was aware of the benefits, as well as the dangers and limitations, of medical healing. Although he gave up practising, he had learnt enough to minister to his own needs.[43] Admittedly, in both East and West some were opposed to the practice of doctors, but for the most part medical and religious healing did not come into conflict. The primacy of God's will could be maintained even in medicine: while natural occurrences were admitted as secondary causes of disease, the primary cause remained the divine command. While Allatios concentrates on religious healing and displays an interest in demonic causation of disease, he does not ignore natural causation and occasionally combines natural, divine and demonic causes of disease. That instrument of divine wrath, the *vrykolakas*, spreads diseases and plague through natural processes. As only God can work beyond natural laws, the *vrykolakas* can only carry out the divine command by making use of natural causation. For Allatios the age-old cause of the plague, bad air, is apparent in the name of the creature.[44]

> the name is indicative of foulness. 'Βοῦρκα' [*Vourka*] is a swamp; not any swamp, but one which now oozes foul water giving a very bad odour — Mephitis, as I will call it. 'Λάκκος' [*Lakkos*] is a ditch or cave, which harbours mud of a similar kind.[45]

The *vrykolakas* kills by infecting its victims "with that poisonous breath of the corpse".[46] Therefore although the primary cause lies with God, God himself works through nature to achieve his will. In his explan-

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[42] Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 121–22; 152 nn. 61–62.
[43] Ibid.
[44] See chapters 4, pp. 90–92; and chapter 7, pp. 206–207 above. Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 8; 57; 68. The revenant was associated with epidemics in many European countries. For bad air as the cause of plague see for example Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, 'La Société byzantine face aux grandes pandémies' in Evelyne Patlagean (ed.), *Maladie et Société à Byzance* (Spoleto, 1993), pp. 21–43.
[45] Allatios, *De opin.* XII, p. 142.
[46] Ibid., XIII, p. 146.

ation of disease, Allatios manages to incorporate ecclesiastical, popular and naturalistic explanations.

Nevertheless, many doctors were beginning to minimise the role they saw for both demonic causation of disease and religious healing. Zacchias recommended that a thorough search be carried out for a natural cause before attributing it to *maleficium* or demonic action.[47] The emphasis on natural causes meant more attention had to be paid to natural remedies. This left a diminishing area of demonic action in which priests could practise their expertise. Of course, this did not rule out the general application of religious remedies but the medical profession rarely credited religious healing with bringing about a cure. The church required doctors to carry out rigorous investigations into the cure of the disease to ensure the veracity of the miracle. They had to certify that the cure could not have taken place through natural means. As we have noted above with Zacchias, physicians were increasingly sceptical of such events, and so for many doctors, in contrast to the wider population, religious healing only played a minor role in the treatment of disease. Physicians were moving towards an understanding of disease which allowed only one cause: the disequilibrium of the natural world.[48]

Allatios' own experience demonstrates the efficacy of religious healing and the relevance of healing miracles in his own time but, for him, demonic and natural disease causation, and divine and natural remedies work alongside each other. In this he is at one with the popular perception. Both Allatios and the popular tradition in Greece that he describes have a pluralistic approach to medicine. Disease may have more than one kind of cause, and so more than one kind of treatment could be sought. For Allatios, religious healing still had a prominent role to play in the panoply of therapies on offer and in his letter to Zacchias, he is trying to readdress the balance between medical and religious healing. Moreover, in Allatios' world view demons and spirits retained a role in the world even greater than that of disease causation.

[47] Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib iii, tit 1, q. 5, p. 229 ff.
[48] Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 24.

The Neoplatonic Outlook of Allatios

While Allatios' emphasis on unction accords with his ecumenical standpoint, it is out of step with certain trends in medical circles. In spite of his medical training, Allatios' outlook does not suggest a movement towards a predominantly naturalistic conception of disease and its cure. On the other hand, his acceptance of the popular position on religious healing should not imply an unsophisticated view of the world, nor that he was totally divorced from the scientific thinking of his age. In the seventeenth century many theories about the workings of the world jostled for position. Newer hypotheses, such as that of Descartes, which posited a mechanistic view of nature, vied with older Neoplatonic conceptions, where the world was understood to be connected by chains of correspondences to the ultimate power, God. In the *De opinationibus*, Allatios' perception of the world is most clearly illustrated in the final third of the work. The section begins with a description of the *stoicheion*, an elemental spirit which inhabits wells and fields, and continues with an exposition of disparate popular beliefs with apparently no connecting theme. A close scrutiny of Allatios' discussion of the *stoicheion*, and the models of interaction with the world this provides, will reveal not only the unifying theme of the section, but will also shed light on Allatios' conception of the world and the relationship that exists between his religious and scientific thought. As the analysis of Allatios' scientific understanding presented in the *De opinationibus* will rest upon his perception of the *stoicheion*, a detailed examination of the complicated ideas surrounding it is required.

The Stoicheion

Allatios opens the section with an account of the *stoicheion* as he knows it from his own time. It is a spirit which is often seen in different forms:

> in the domestic hearths, cellars, fields and wells, very often at night, rarely during the day. It appears sometimes as a serpent, lizard or some other reptile, sometimes as a mannikin, most often of a very black hue.[49]

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[49] Allatios, *De opin.* XXII p. 166. For the appearance of the *stoicheion* as a snake see XXII, p. 167.

The *stoicheion* of the house is closely connected both to the place, and to the inhabitants. If these creatures are harmed, they in turn cause harm to the family unit: the head of the household, or relatives of the family die, and domestic objects go missing. In order to ward off ill fortune, people treat the spirits with great respect. This conception of the *stoicheion* was widespread in the early modern Aegean. Travellers report that when serpents were found inside houses, they were treated carefully, even reverently, on account of the good fortune they brought to the inhabitants.[50] However, the natural world was also inhabited by these creatures; springs and wells in particular provided frequent sightings.[51] Allatios describes the well-dwelling *stoicheion* as a small Ethiopian man, who

> molests no one, says nothing, calling women towards him with a nod and a gesture. If they approach he welcomes them kindly, and they say that he rewards them with many of his own things. If they do not approach, he does not care, nor is unkind towards them.[52]

Such a character was supposed to live in a well in Chios Town, and to disturb the neighbourhood in the middle of the night by galloping up and down the street on his horse, which lived in the well with him.

Not all spirits were benign. Allatios argues that *stoicheia* were not worshipped but this may have been an attempt to counter reports of a different kind of relationship between the spirit and householders. The English consul Rycaut records a sacrifice to the spirit of place when a new house was being built. Workmen burnt the blood of a sheep or cock under the first stone of the foundations in order to bring good fortune to the threshold.[53] These actions were guided by the idea that it was necessary to compensate the spirit for taking its land and to gain its favour to prevent future hostile relations.[54]

Even though Allatios does not mention these sacrifices, they are consistent with his main point that a connection exists between the

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[50] James T. Bent, *The Cyclades, or Life among the Insular Greeks* (London, 1885), p. 115.

[51] Hobhouse, *Journey*, vol. 2, p. 529.

[52] Allatios, *De opin.* XXII, p. 166.

[53] Rycaut, *Church*es, pp. 371–72. See also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 103.

[54] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 103. He also provides examples of these *exotika* in modern Greece. There are reports of *stoicheia* stealing the shadow of someone connected to the building work, particularly if it involved wells, and this causes the afflicted to waste away. See Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 255–91 and Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 247.

spirit and the fortune of the members of the house. But the behaviour of the *stoicheion* does not only reflect its treatment at the hands of the inhabitants; it can also reveal the fate of individuals associated with the household. In an age before rapid communications, it was extremely difficult to obtain information about members of the family who had travelled abroad. The *stoicheion* could help meet this need. Allatios recites his mother's experience of the phenomenon:

> Fifteen days before I arrived on Chios, my mother was in a cupboard, looking for something or other that was in there. As soon as she opened <the door>, she saw the snake curled up in the middle, resting. She shut the door and told her neighbours. An old woman, one of those out of whom the Sybilline oracles poured, replied, "In a short time the master of the house will arrive." Neither my mother, nor the old woman, nor anyone else was in a position to know about my journey, since I undertook it unexpectedly, and even had I wished to send back more certain information concerning my departure, I would not have been able to. Now, within the days foretold by the old woman, I arrived home.[55]

The connection between the *stoicheion* and household members works at a distance and this means the *stoicheion* can inform the family of the welfare of relatives in distant lands.

Allatios then moves on to relate these house spirits to another kind of *stoicheion*:

> There are other demons whom one may call quite aptly gods born in individual elements [στοιχείων], some visible, others invisible, in ether, fire, air, and water to such an extent that there is nothing in this universe which lacks a soul, nor does it lack the natural life of the higher animals.[56]

These demons are called '*stoicheia*' or '*elementa*' because they were spirits which were born in the elements. Each element is vivified by such a spirit, which derives its name from the association with the elements or *stoicheia*. The spirits of other material objects are also called *stoicheia* by analogy. Hence Allatios' spirits of the fields, wells or houses receive their name in this way.

However, '*stoicheion*' and its derivatives have a much wider range of uses than 'spirit of place':

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[55] Allatios, *De opin.* XXII, p. 267.

[56] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 163; Albinus, *Alcinoos, Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, ed. John Whittaker (Paris, 1990), ch. 15, p. 35.

> Not only demons themselves are called 'elements' [*elementa* i.e. *stoicheia*], but also things produced by magicians through the power of the magic arts, whereby inanimate things govern the fortune or life of some man or other.[57]

The fate of an individual or place could be bound to specific material objects: Simeon of Bulgaria "whose fate was linked to the statue [ἐστοιχειῶσθαι], perished" when his image was decapitated. Indeed, the emperor discovered through careful enquiry that "at the very hour when the head of the statue had been cut off, Simeon died in Bulgaria from a sickness of the heart".[58] Simeon's fortune was therefore governed by the statue.

It was not only the fate of human beings that could be controlled in this way. Apollonios of Tyana, the second-century philosopher, was able to make use of such connections between objects to control the natural world:

> When Claudius was emperor, there was a Pythagorean philosopher, Apollonios, a Tyanean by birth, who performed wonders through magical figures [στοιχειωματικὸς]. When he arrived in Byzantium he was asked by the inhabitants to bring about through magic arts that neither serpents nor scorpions would strike, that midges would not appear, nor horses go wild, and that they would not savage each other, nor any other creature. He also controlled [ἐστοιχείωσεν] the River Lykos, lest it harmed Byzantium by its floods.[59]

The objects with which Apollonios controlled the animals and rivers could also be called '*stoicheia*'. In the *Paschal Chronicle*, these actions of Apollonios were described by the word '*telesmata*'.[60] Allatios equates these with *stoicheia*, which are explained as "supernatural things <produced> by magical force and incantation."[61] A *stoicheion* therefore was not only an element or a demon which inhabited material objects, but also an object which had been magicked so that it could control human beings, animals or natural forces.

Allatios provides no clue as to how these two uses of *stoicheion* relate to each other. It is peculiar that there should be no connection,

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[57] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 163.

[58] Ibid.; Georgios Kedrenos, *Georgius Cedrenus Opera*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, vol. 2, p. 308 lines 1–8.

[59] Kedrenos, *Opera*, vol 1. p. 346 lines 18–22, p. 347 lines 1–2. Compare p. 431, lines 14–18. Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 163.

[60] *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Ludovicus Dindorfius (Bonn, 1832), vol 1: 93, p. 467.

[61] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, pp. 164–65.

given Allatios' desire to show that in such matters as these, things remain constant throughout the ages.[62] Consequently we must look more closely at Allatios' explanation of the words.[63] He translates 'ἐστοιχειῶσθαι' as 'he whose fate was linked', 'ἐστοιχείωσεν' as 'brought about by magic arts' or 'controlled'. It is clear from the passage above that he considers that this control was achieved through magical means, for Apollonios of Tyana was 'στοιχειωματικὸς', that is, "he performed wonders through magical figures." This agrees with Allatios' earlier explanation of the word as denoting magicians "who make similar things with particular signs and incantations."[64]

What, then, is the magician doing? Allatios does not explain. Fortunately, we can turn to the analysis of modern historians interested in this practice to shed some light on the issue. Greenfield's discussion in particular is helpful for understanding the link between the different usages. The magician's action is denoted by the verb '*stoicheioun*' and for Greenfield, in the context of Byzantine demonology, this involves:

> primarily the notion of 'fixing' the powers believed to lie behind, in, or under the astral bodies (or *stoichea* (sic)) into an object such as a statue or amulet through which the practitioner hopes to perform his magic, a process which will certainly have involved the use of power names and signs.[65]

The magician is drawing down spirits from the planets into matter. Through this process, man-made objects are then filled with spirit, like the objects of the natural world in which the *stoicheia* dwell.

This process relies on an astrological connection that does not seem to be present in Allatios' work. However, on closer inspection,

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[62] Ibid., I, p. 114.

[63] For Allatios 'elemental spirit' is the original meaning of the word '*stoicheion*' because of the relationship he sees between the meaning of the word and its etymology. '*Stoicheion*' in the sense of an object acted upon by a magician in such a way that it could control the life of an animate being is a secondary usage, and the other connected words are derived from this. Allatios' analysis differs from Blum's: Blum takes the original meaning of the word to have been 'magical sign'. The meaning then developed to encompass a demon bound by magical signs and the talisman by means of which such a demon exercised its influence. Finally, it came to stand for an elemental demon. See Claes Blum, 'The Meaning of στοιχεῖον and its Derivatives in the Byzantine Age: a Study in Byzantine Magic', *Eranos* 44 (1946), 325.

[64] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 164.

[65] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 194.

the excerpt from the *Testament of Solomon* provides the missing link. The author, assuming the persona of Solomon, writes:

> I ordered that the demon be brought into my presence. And the assembled spirits with handsome features entered together. I myself, Solomon, was amazed and I asked, "Who are you?" And with one voice they all replied together, "We are those whom they call elements [*elementa* (Latin), στοιχεῖα (Greek)], Lords of the world of shadows: Self-deception, Discord etc."[66]

In this extract '*stoicheion*' refers neither to an elemental spirit nor a talisman created by a magus but denotes a 'celestial body' or a 'planet', a meaning it had developed in New Testament times.[67] Although this definition is not clear from Allatios' translation, it is difficult to see how he could have been ignorant of the astrological implications of '*stoicheion*'. The combination of demonology and astrology is a characteristic of the *Testament of Solomon*. It is made clear in this work that demons reside in the stars or constellations, deriving their name *stoicheia* from their relationship to the planets.[68] In fact, following the recitations of the names of the *stoicheia* in the passage above, the text continues "our stars in heaven look small". A later chapter of the *Testament* explicitly places the *stoicheia* within the context of the thirty-six decans or deities of the zodiac, each of whom ruled over 10° of the 360° of the universe.[69]

There is a further obscure clue to the astrological connection between the talismans and the stars in Allatios' throwaway line that the talismans used by Apollonios, called *telesmata* or *stoicheia*, are also called by some 'ἀποτελεσματικὰ τῆς γλύψεως' ['*apotelesmatika tes glypseos*'], which implies some kind of carved object, infused with spirit through astrological means. *Stoicheia* are not only *telesmata*, but are described as being *apotelesmatika*, that is 'brought about through astrology'. Allatios tells us that *apotelesmatika* are "called by others 'στοιχειώματα'

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[66] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 163. For the full text see McCown, *Testament*, 8:1–4, pp. 31–32, although Allatios' text is not identical with any of the manuscripts examined by McCown. For a translation see Duling, 'Testament', 8:1–4, pp. 969–70. A version of the *Testament of Solomon* is also to be found in *PG* vol. 122 (1864), cols 1315–58. However, McCown argues that the text used here is inaccurate.

[67] Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 191. Galatians 4:3; 4:9; 2 Peter 3:10–12.

[68] See H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford, 1940), sv '*stoicheion*'.

[69] Duling, 'Testament', p. 952. For links between the demons and stars see 2:2; 8:2; 18:2.

['*stoicheiomata*']". He does not elaborate on this statement, nor even provide gloss in Latin in his usual way, but the implication is that the word '*stoicheiomata*' also indicates the role of astrology in the creation of the talismans.

Allatios' failure to provide a translation for these terms, and his consistent rendering of '*stoicheion*' as '*elementum*' obscures the connection with the stars but this illustrates not Allatios' ignorance of the astrological association but the difficulties inherent in translating '*stoicheion*'. Latin does not have a term which covers all the uses of '*stoicheion*' and Allatios has to choose between bringing out the link to the stars and using the same Latin word for the different kinds of *stoicheion*. Since his overall method depends upon establishing the constancy of customs, he chooses to emphasise the continuity of the term by using the same word '*elementum*' in each case.[70] This translation works admirably in the second example of the *stoicheion*, where he is talking about the presence of demons within elements, but obscures the connection in the example from the *Testament of Solomon* and thus the point of this quotation is almost lost. Even though the association is obscured in the translation, Allatios has still provided a text which links the *stoicheion* to the stars.

Furthermore, Allatios was most definitely aware of the theory of Neoplatonic powers deriving from the planets. Even though the bond between the spirits and planets may have been lost from Byzantine popular culture, it was still very much alive in western astrology, where God was believed to infuse the non-personal spirit of the planets with power and these in turn affected human life. Allatios had undergone medical training, and medicine and astronomy (or astrology, for the two were not distinguished at this period) remained closely linked in the early seventeenth century, although the situation was beginning to change. The various parts of the body were influenced by different signs of the zodiac and it was important to plot the course of the stars to determine appropriate or beneficial times for medical treatment.[71] In more extreme cases, the physician diagnosed the disease and prescribed treatment just by casting horoscopes.[72] It was therefore essential that doctors observed the stars

[70] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 114.
[71] Thomas, *Religion*, p. 340.
[72] Miller, 'Astrological Diagnosis', pp. 27–33.

closely and it is not surprising that many doctors had an abiding interest in the movement of the heavens. Iulio Caesare Lagalla, who taught Allatios medicine, wrote a treatise on the telescope and many of the leading astronomers started life as doctors, Keppler and Copernicus to name just two.[73]

Allatios' own interest in astrology is evident from the fact that he produced from the Greek a Latin translation of the *Paraphrase* of Ptolemy's *Quadripartite*, an astrological text which deals with *apotelesmata* or astrological prognostications.[74] This book was the attempt of the second-century author, Ptolemy, to provide a scientific basis for astrology. The manuscript editions were often entitled 'Τὰ πρὸς Σύρον ἀποτελεσματικά' and the text would have made the astrological meaning of '*apotelesmata*' clear to Allatios. It was Allatios' edition of the *Paraphrase* that was used in 1701 as the basis for a translation of the book into English.[75] Interestingly, once again both the translator and his addressees were doctors. The translator, a certain John Whalley, specially selected Allatios' text because of its quality. He writes that this was because Allatios was:

> promoted to be Library keeper to the vatican (sic) at Rome; where at that time, the choicest books that gold, silver, favour or interest could procure, were [to be found] (as they still are), so that the premises considered, it is not unreasonable in my thoughts to conclude, that a man of so Great a Learning and Parts and Opportunity, as Allatios had, and so well inclin'd to the Art, as his Labour or Translating this book (as aforesaid) bespakes him to be, would (to Gratify his Pains) chuse (sic) not the worst but the most Undoubtedly True Copy that could be procured, to make his Translation from.[76]

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[73] Iulio Caesare Lagalla, *De phoenomenis in orbe lunae novi telescopii usu a D. Gallileo Gallileo nunc iterum suscitatis physica disputatio* (Venice, 1612). Webster, *Paracelsus*, pp. 4–5.

[74] Leo Allatios (ed. and trans.), *Procli Diadochi Paraphrasis in Ptolemaei Libros IV* (Leiden, 1635). Allatios' translation was not the first, however. Translations had been made from the Arabic by Plato of Tivoli in the first half of the twelfth century. Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science* (London, 1924), pp. 111–112 also notes that a manuscript edition exists in Oxford of a translation from the Greek from around the same time.

[75] Allatios' text was also the basis for another two translations into English: J.M. Ashmand, *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos or Quadripartite* (London, 1822) and James Wilson, *The Tetrabiblos or Quadripartite of Potolemy* (London, 1828). On the various editions see Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ed. and tr. F.E. Robbins (London, 1940), pp. x–xv.

[76] Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Quadripartite; or, Four Books concerning the Influences of the Stars*, trans. John Whalley (London, 1701), Preface.

Thus John Whalley, himself a "student in Astrology and Physick" argues that Allatios' translation demonstrates his knowledge of the subject. Other texts, including the popular *Hermetic Corpus* contained information about the creation of talismans by drawing down power from the heavenly bodies. Allatios was well aware of the astrological theories in which powers, personal or impersonal, were resident in the planets and that it was from these that the heavenly power was transmitted to the earthly souls.

The problems involved in rendering '*stoicheion*' into Latin meant that Allatios was forced to provide a paraphrase. As we have seen he translates 'ἐστοιχειῶσθαι' as 'whose fate was linked', 'ἐστοιχείωσεν' as 'controlled' or "brought about by magical arts".[77] The correct translation of these terms required a great deal of background knowledge and understanding of the practices. This is most clearly illustrated, not in the case of *stoicheion*, but of *telesma*, a word which denotes similar talismanic practices. When Allatios' translation of a passage of the *Paschal Chronicle* is compared to that of the Jesuit scholar Matthew Raderus, the importance of background knowledge for an accurate translation is made manifest. When faced with the Greek "καὶ ποιῶν τελέσματα εἰς τὰς πόλεις καὶ χὼρας" Raderus rendered it "*in urbibus et regionibus vestigalia instituit*" i.e. "he introduced taxes in the towns and provinces". Again he translates "ἐποίησε τελέσματα πολλὰ τὸ τῶν χελώνων, καὶ τὸ τοῦ λύκου ποταμοῦ κατά μέσον τῆς πόλεως" as "*ibique portoriorum ex ostreorum piscatione, lyco flumine, quod mediam secat avitatem, et equorum aliarumque rerum proventu accipiendorum auctor fuit*" i.e.: "and there the author received dues from oyster fishing, from the River Lykos, which runs through the town and from the rearing of horses and other things."[78] Raderus is taking the meaning of 'τέλεσμα' from the ancient Greek, where it means 'money paid' and from the verb 'τελέω', 'pay tax'. Allatios' translation therefore reveals his depth of knowledge on the subject, which he emphasises by drawing attention to Raderus' faulty translation.[79]

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[77] These words are difficult to translate and modern writers have debated their precise meaning. Allatios' interpretation in fact corresponds to that of modern scholars such as Blum and Greenfield. See Blum, 'στοιχεῖον', 323–24; Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp. 193–94 and n. 63 above.

[78] *Chronicon Alexandrinum idemque astronomicum et ecclesiasticum, vulgo Siculum, seu Fasti Siculi* ed. and trans. Matthew Raderus (Munich, 1615), pp. 590–91.

[79] Allatios, *De opin.* XXV, p. 165.

Even though Allatios does not state the association explicitly, he was well aware of the connection between the different uses of '*stoicheion*'. *Stoicheia* are the powers present in the stars which emanate downwards and vivify every living creature. These powers were called down into objects, also called *stoicheia*, through magical rites. In the same way that Allatios' spirit of place was connected by analogy to the elemental spirits, so too were the 'magical *stoicheia*' created by the magus. In his text, Allatios passes from the sources of power, the powerful astral spirits, to an animated world, and then to man-made spirits. Without the first quotation from the *Testament of Solomon*, the link between the other two would be lost. It is the passage from the *Testament of Solomon* that connects the concept of elemental spirits to the magical *stoicheia*, i.e. man-made objects, which have had a demon artificially introduced by magical means. If this extract had been omitted, the Neoplatonic scheme of the distribution of power would be incomplete. This short quotation, which at first sight seems out of place when compared with the extensive examples of spirits of place or magical *stoicheia*, is the key to the whole of the final section of the *De opinationibus*.

Neoplatonism in the West

Although the terms '*stoicheion*' and '*telesma*' may not have been universally known, the Neoplatonic system which underpinned them was familiar to western scholars. Once Allatios had explained the meaning of *stoicheion*, he did not need to draw out the explicit connection between the different uses, for to those versed in astrology and Neoplatonism the association between *stoicheia* and the planets was self-evident. Renaissance Neoplatonism held that man inhabited a living universe. Everything in it possessed a spirit and earth and heaven were linked together in a hierarchical chain of being, from the highest to lowest. This framework was heavily influenced by the work of the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino who provided translations of the most important Neoplatonic writings. His edition of the *Hermetic Corpus* was published in 1463, the writings of Porphyry and Proclus in 1498, and a Latin translation of Michael Psellos' *De Daemonibus* in 1497.[80] These texts were very important for the development of

[80] Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oscar Kristeller et al. (eds.), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (London, 1946), pp. 186–87.

western Neoplatonism and helped Ficino shape his new synthesis of Neoplatonism and Christianity.[81] He placed much greater value on these non-Christian authors than on early Church Fathers. In fact, he saw Neoplatonic doctrine as divinely inspired and believed that its revival was necessary for the survival and prosperity of Christianity.[82] Fed by these streams of thought, Renaissance Neoplatonism provided a common ground between Christianity and certain pagan philosophers. There is evidence to suggest that Allatios himself understood the world in terms of this Neoplatonic system. Alongside his translation of Ptolemy he produced an edition of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, which systematises and summarises Neoplatonic metaphysics, touching on issues such as souls and planetary influence.[83]

This understanding of the world influenced both demonic and natural magic. In demonic magic, demons replaced the impersonal planetary spirits and could be drawn into objects or compelled to accomplish tasks. Natural magic, where the spirits remained impersonal, could also have an effect on inanimate objects, or on the body.[84] By the seventeenth century many natural magicians, such as Della Porta, rejected the action of demons as a cause of events.[85] They believed that to posit a demonic cause for events was not merely heretical, it was completely incorrect. However, these natural magicians retained an understanding of the world in terms of chains of spiritual correspondences and believed that the connections between higher and lower orders could be uncovered and put to use by human beings. For example, Della Porta stated that the herb rue was an 'enemy' of hemlock. Although rue caused ulcers if touched, the juice of hemlock soothed it. Extrapolating from this he argued the converse: that rue was an antidote against hemlock poisoning.[86] Allatios' example from the work of Michael Psellos, the Byzantine historian and rhetorician, concerning the prevention of plant disease and infestation of the crops seems to suggest the same principle. Psellos states:

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[81] Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, 1964), p. 17.
[82] Cassirer, *Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 186–87.
[83] Allatios, *Procli Diadochi.*
[84] Daniel Pickering Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London, 1958), p. 76.
[85] Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 207.
[86] Ibid., p. 213.

> I myself know opposing properties which are endowed with virtue and power against animal damage and, equally, the poison most effective against locusts and rust and against others which lay waste to the vines and devour the corn.[87]

Therefore the Neoplatonic outlook was common to East and West.

These sympathies and antipathies were hidden and difficult to find. Sometimes they could be discerned by observing the external features of objects and considering characteristics, such as colour, shape and taste, but this method was not always reliable. Since under Della Porta's scheme they could not be learned by coercing demons to reveal hidden secrets, the only sure way to discover correspondences was through empirical research. Thus this way of looking at the world had a bearing on the number of works produced on the 'secrets of nature' in the seventeenth century.[88] The rhetoric of 'secrets of nature' encouraged research and experimentation into hidden causes. It was only by these processes that information about the workings of the world could be known. The action of the magnet was the paradigmatic 'secret of nature', where the peculiar virtues of the stone were not apparent to the onlooker. It was only under certain circumstances, when the magnet was placed close to a piece of iron, that these special qualities were revealed. The other new sciences, such as metallurgy and chemistry, which at the outset were very close to alchemy, fell under the same classification. This way of looking at the world therefore had an influence on the scientific developments of the seventeenth century.

Although the extent to which the new discoveries and developments of the period rested upon such a world view is hotly debated, it is clear that the most prominent scientists of the age were familiar with this outlook.[89] Even Galileo Galilei, who rejected the search for occult causes, was attracted to join the *Accademia dei Lincei*, which had been set up by Federico Cesi and guided by Della Porta in

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[87] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIX, p. 178. This approach can also be seen in the Galenic theory of opposites, which was frequently resorted to in western medicine of the early modern period.

[88] Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 207–208.

[89] On this debate compare for example the viewpoints of Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno* and Robert S. Westman and J.E. McGuire, *Hermeticism and the Scientific Revolution* (Los Angeles, 1977); Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Natural Magic, Hermetism, and Occultism in Early Modern Science' in David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (eds.), *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 261–301.

order to investigate the secrets of nature.[90] Again, anxious to win the patronage of Duke Cosimo II de Medici, he spoke of the many secrets he had in his possession — he was well aware of the parameters and popularity of the genre. Newton was also touched by this perspective. Whether or not his own research was influenced by the methods and practices associated with the genre, he was deeply interested in alchemy, and wrote many tracts on the subject. Situated in the circle of the Cambridge Neoplatonists, it is not surprising that his scientific thought was influenced by their philosophy.[91] Even his theory of gravitational action was conceived of in Neoplatonic terms.[92] Therefore, in the *De opinationibus* Allatios did not need to provide an explicit explanation of the relationship between the planets and the elemental spirits. The system would have been obvious to the reader familiar with these astrological and Neoplatonic ideas.

Allatios himself was greatly interested in the secrets of nature or '*arcana naturae*' as he termed them. Like many others of his time, Allatios was moved to write a treatise on the actions of the magnet. Unfortunately it was never published.[93] His interest is also apparent from a letter he wrote to the philosopher Licetus Fortunius (1577–1657) where he records in detail his encounter with a luminescent stone. He states that its peculiar properties could not possibly be known from its dull, grey exterior and, in fact, they could not even be discerned in daylight, a factor which added to the occult nature of the phenomenon. However, by careful observation Allatios discovered that the light of the stone was only visible in the dark, and only when a light had shone on it shortly before.[94] Its luminescent quality, like the attraction of a lodestone for a piece of iron, was not immediately apparent. The stone must be placed in particular circumstances before these hidden qualities would reveal themselves.

Allatios' emphasis on experience, experiment and observation is also evident in the *De opinationibus*. In his introduction and throughout the text he stresses the importance of careful investigation as

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[90] Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 230–31.

[91] J.E. McGuire, 'Neoplatonism and Active Principles: Newton and the Corpus Hermeticum' in *Hermeticism*, p. 95.

[92] Ibid., pp. 104; 131.

[93] This work, written in 1628, is held in the Vallicelliana library in Italy catalogued as Vallic. All. LXXVII.1. See Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', p. 151, n. 63.

[94] Leo Allatios, 'De lapide in tenebris emisante' in Fortunius Licetus, *De quaesitis per epistolas a claris viris responsa*, vol. 1 (Bologna, 1640–1648), p. 40.

opposed to intuition.[95] His method does not arise purely out of his antiquarian training but from his interest in the natural world. The fact that Allatios' investigations in this instance are largely limited to the archives does not conflict with his statement. Texts too were believed to demonstrate facts, which would at a later date be demonstrated in nature itself.[96] The subject matter of the *De opinationibus*, as well as Allatios' methodology, was appropriate for research into 'secrets of nature.' 'Secrets of nature' could include a wide range of bizarre and curious happenings. There were secrets of every branch of knowledge, including the different customs and practices of foreign peoples and they were often also associated with tales of strange events, prodigies, exotic beasts and far-off lands. The *De opinationibus*, with its description of walking corpses, child-stealing demons, and miraculous happenings, fits into such a category.[97]

Neoplatonism and the De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus

The structure of the final section of the *De opinationibus* is informed by the Neoplatonic connections established in chapter XXI. Although Allatios does not discuss *stoicheia* as such in the rest of his text, the later chapters follow the model of interaction between humankind and the world that the earlier chapter lays down: the fate of human beings can be controlled by inanimate objects or animals, and humankind can affect and control the natural world, not just through practical actions but through words and rituals which act on the correspondences existing between men and objects. For example, in chapter XXII Allatios relates that if a hen crows, it is taken as a dire omen for the whole household. In order to avert the omen the hen must be beheaded on the threshold:

> They affirm that they have taken care of that impending misfortune if he entirely severs the neck with one blow. If he does not accomplish this with a single stroke but the axe is left sticking in the body or in some other of its parts, the calamity has not been averted, but worse is expected: so much force is believed to reside in the neck of a crowing hen.[98]

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[95] Allatios, *De opin.* I, p. 114; V, p. 124; XVII, p. 157; XX, p. 162; XXIV, p. 171; XXVI, p. 175 etc.

[96] Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 214–16.

[97] Ibid., p. 279.

[98] Allatios, *De opin.* XXVII, p. 175; Cerbu, 'Leone Allacci', pp. 121; 151–52 n. 64 identifies the *De opin.* as belonging to this genre.

In the same way that decapitating the statue (*stoicheion*) controlled the fate of Simeon the Bulgarian, the beheading of the chicken controls the fate of the family. In the first case, however, the decapitation had fatal consequences for Simeon, in the second it was necessary to ward off evil fortune from the household.

Rituals which manipulate hidden correspondences could be used to get rid of garden pests. Just as Apollonios of Tyana managed to control (*stoicheiomatikos*) scorpions and midges, Psellos provided a similar method by which insects could be removed from the fields:

> You have heard perhaps of the hydra, a celestial sign. Let it not escape your notice when it is rising. When you see its light, immediately hunt the viper. It is an animal and not difficult to hunt, well known to everyone by its markings. Put it on its back and cut it from chin to tail. Then, hanging it from a fine thread, secretly fortify <the place>, as it were, tracing something like a circle in the fields. The rust in the plants hence deprived of strength, the locust will not land on them, nor will the caterpillar be laid in the flowers.[99]

Christian practices also showed how mankind could act on the world using particular words and actions. The 'Exorcism of St Tryphon', a rite accepted by the Orthodox Church, was used to expel pests from the garden. The priests sprinkled the ground with water blessed at Epiphany and then, leaving the garden, went into the countryside. The insects followed them and so were removed from the crops.[100]

Again, because of the link which existed between the natural world and human beings, events could be interpreted and were thought to provide information about the fate of individuals. As we have seen, Allatios' mother tells her aged next-door neighbour that she has found a snake (*stoicheion*) in her cupboard and the old woman interprets it as a sign of Allatios' imminent return to Chios.[101] In a Christian context, the movement of the lamps above the patriarchal throne indicated the fate of the patriarch: "When the hymns were sung they flickered, and anyone who saw them had proof of the ejection of the current patriarch."[102] In both cases natural phenomena conveyed a message to the onlookers. Therefore, even though

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[99] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIX, p. 179.

[100] Ibid., XXIX, p. 179; 'Exorcism of St Tryphon' in *Εὐχολόγιον τὸ Μέγα* (Venice, 1877), pp. 500–503.

[101] Allatios, *De opin.* XXII, p. 167.

[102] Ibid., XXIII, p. 169; George Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 2:15, p. 146.

the word '*stoicheion*' and its derivatives are not used in the examples, in the final section of the *De opinationibus* the underlying concepts they embody are elaborated in examples from the later Byzantine period and Allatios' own life. The concepts that Allatios introduces in the context of the *stoicheion* bind together his last ten chapters into a coherent system, a system resting upon a Neoplatonic conception of the world.

Allatios' Neoplatonism and his acceptance of a world view in which humans could affect and control nature through words and rituals enabled him to accept popular practices. He describes the actions of those who wished to know whether a relative or a friend travelling abroad was still alive. First they offered up prayers and then they lit a torch, candle or lamp in the open air or in front of an icon. If the absent friend was alive, the light would not go out, whatever the weather. If he was dead, the candle would be extinguished, even if there was no wind. Further, some claimed they could tell how his life fared by the colour of the candle flame. Allatios then endorses the practice. He had received an icon of the Virgin Mary from "an intelligent and wise man." On the icon the Virgin Mary was:

> depicted with so great a veneration that it possessed among many other qualities the following quite extraordinary one: if anyone, concerned about the life of another, whoever he may be, lit a candle before her, it is discovered without question from the light of that candle whether he is still among the living. Indeed, if he lives, whatever kind of tempest rages, that light is not extinguished. If his life has departed, the light is extinguished even without a breath of wind.[103]

Allatios also relates his own experience with the *stoicheion*. Just as his mother had been informed of his visit by the appearance of the snake, so Allatios' own return to Rome was foretold in this fashion:

> Eight months later, woken from sleep in the middle of the night, I felt something or other under the very pillow on which I was resting my head, snoring. Stretching out my hand I seemed to lay hold of a snake, which fled away immediately at my touch. First thing in the morning, I told the neighbours what I had touched in the night. That same old woman, turned to me and, smiling, said, "Soon, on this account, you will have to travel from this place to another." Indeed this prophecy then came to pass, although I myself neither thought

[103] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIII, p. 168.

> about going away, nor was there any reason why I should prepare myself for a journey. Not twenty days had passed and the question came up and a journey to Rome was decided upon.[104]

For once Allatios does not scoff at popular beliefs. His experience gives credence to the belief even though it is identified as 'popular opinion'.

Allatios' Neoplatonism also allows him to accept popular demons in terms of Neoplatonic spirits of place. We have already seen how he uses the Neoplatonic terminology of Albinus to explain the seventeenth-century *stoicheion* and in his debate with Psellos it is apparent that Allatios understands the *nereides* in a similar way.[105] In chapter XX he argues that Psellos confused the opinions of the common people with sicknesses and accuses him of understanding afflictions, such as indigestion (*barychnas*) and nightmares (*ephialtes*), in the same way as popular demons, like the *kallikantzaroi*, *vrykolakes*, and *nereides*. Allatios argues that popular demons should not be treated as diseases but rather as spirits of place. They appear not to those in bed, but to people walking in the fields and roads. Having dismissed Psellos' conception, Allatios finally finds something convincing in his argument concerning *nereides*:

> At last, however, from his *Dialogue on the Operation of Demons* he said of the same: "Those who live in damp places and are accustomed to a better way of life, turn themselves into birds and women. It may be that the Greeks call these *nyads, nereides* and *dryads* in the feminine gender."[106]

The *nereides* therefore are the kind of spirits of place which like to dwell in a watery environment. For Allatios, the *nereides*, the *stoicheion*, and to a certain extent the *kallikantzaroi* — the goblin-like creatures who live in wild and isolated places — are really examples of these elemental spirits which have been personalised and brought into the popular tradition. Allatios argues that his interpretation, unlike that of Psellos, conforms to the popular viewpoint, and in terms of his location of particular demons in particular places he is correct. However, like Psellos and the western Renaissance philosophers Agrippa von Nettesheim and Della Porta, Allatios still incorporates popular

[104] Ibid., XXII, pp. 167–68.
[105] Ibid., XXI, p. 163.
[106] Ibid., XX, p. 162; Psellos, '*De Daemonibus*', 169–70.

beliefs into a learned tradition — that of Neoplatonism. Nevertheless, it is his Neoplatonism that allows him to treat popular beliefs sympathetically, rather than stigmatising them as demonic or wholly foolish.

Indeed Allatios' Neoplatonism allows him to treat popular and official beliefs within the same framework for he also understood official Christian practices to work through the manipulation of Neoplatonic correspondences by means of words and rituals. Christian rites and rituals depended upon the ability of words, such as those pronounced at the Eucharist and baptism, to effect changes in the order of things. Allatios treats official Christian beliefs regarding unction and holy water in a similar way to the popular practices. In the section of the *De opinationibus* where he deals with Neoplatonic correspondences in the natural world, he returns to the question of holy water, which he dealt with in the context of popular healing, earlier in the text. The blessing spoken over the baptismal water changed its nature, that is, the water responded to the words in the blessing. He also returns to the example of the water made holy when used to wash the chalice.[107] Although Allatios does not explain the process by which the water becomes holy, for him it stands in a chain of action and reaction that goes back to the consecration of the bread and wine in the Eucharist. The consecrated elements then acted upon other objects with which they came into contact, such as the chalice and altar, passing on their holiness. These objects in turn acted upon the nature of the water that was used to wash them, and finally the water conferred a blessing upon the worshipper who drank it. No doubt Allatios would have accepted that the transformation of the Eucharistic elements occurred through divine grace, yet it was through the particular words of the prayer of consecration that the transformation was initiated.

Moreover, Allatios sees in this living universe a factor which underpins not only Christianity, popular and official, and learned Neoplatonic ideas, but Graeco-Roman pagan beliefs too. In his discussion of water demons he cites popular, Christian, and pagan accounts. *Nereides* should be considered in the same light as the watery demons mentioned by pagan authors like Eunapius and the Church Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa and Tertullian. Following his account of the popular well-dwelling *stoicheion* from Chios he reports that:

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[107] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIV, p. 174.

> it is not surprising that such spirits are spied most frequently in wells, and fountains or other places, in stagnant water or mud, for, as Tertullian testifies in his book *De Baptismo* "Unclean spirits lurk in water".[108]

For Allatios, Tertullian's account shows that popular beliefs are consistent with those of the official church, lending credence to the popular view that spirits live in wells. Allatios then proceeds to cite pagan authors in support of his thesis that demons seek out 'watery places'. He compares Tertullian's account with the treatment of demons in the *Lives* of Porphyry and Iamblichus. Porphyry ejects the demon 'Kaustham' from the baths, whereas Iamblichus summons the demons from the stream in the shape of a boy. Iamblichus informed his disciples:

> this spring is called Erote, and the name of the one next to it is Anterote." He at once touched the water with his hand — he happened to be sitting on the ledge of the spring where the overflow runs off — and uttering a brief summons he called forth a boy from the depth of the spring.

His disciples persuaded him to go on to the next spring where "he went through the same performance there also, and summoned another Erote like the first in all respects, except that his hair was darker and fell loose in the sun".[109] Iamblichus was able to draw out the spirits of the springs and make them visible to his disciples. Christian works, namely the *Life* of Gregory the Wonderworker and the *De Daemonibus* of Psellos, illustrate the same point: there are spirits dwelling in the natural world which seek out water sources.[110]

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[108] Ibid., XXII, p. 167; Tertullian, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans, (London 1964), Greek, pp. 12–14, English, pp. 13–15.

[109] Allatios refers to this episode but does not quote from it. See Allatios, *De opin.* XXIII, p. 167. For the full text see *Eunapii Vitae Sophistarum*, ed. J. Giangrande (Rome, 1956), [459] pp. 368–70; for the English translation quoted above see W.C. Wright (ed.), *The Lives of the Sophists: Philostratus and Eunapius* (London, 1952), pp. 369–70.

[110] Gautier (ed.), '*De Daemonibus*', 169–70; Gregory of Nyssa, 'De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi', ed. Gunter Heil in Gunter Heil, Joannes P. Cavarnos and Otto Lendle (eds.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera: Sermones*, vol. 10 (Leiden, 1990), bk 1, pt. II, pp. 51–52. For an English translation see Gregory of Nyssa, 'On the Life and Wonders of Our Father among the Saints, Gregory the Wonderworker' in Michael Slusser (ed.), *St Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works* (Washington D.C., 1998), ch. 13, pp. 80–81.

It is significant that Neoplatonism influenced all the authors Allatios cites in his discussion of water demons. Eunapius, the author of the *Lives* of Porphyry and Iamblichus, was a fourth-century Neoplatonic philosopher who was extremely hostile to Christianity. His *Lives* of Porphyry and Iamblichus form part of a series of biographies of fourth-century Neoplatonists which he wrote to compete with Christian *Saints' Lives* of the period. Porphyry himself was the author of the *Life* of the philosopher Plotinus and was also his disciple, editing the works which later became central to the Renaissance Neoplatonic project. Iamblichus was well known during the Renaissance for his own writings and for his preservation of the *Hermetic Corpus*. Neoplatonic theory was brought into Christian theology through the work of a number of the early Church Fathers, including Gregory of Nyssa, who produced a synthesis of Christianity and Plotinian mysticism. Psellos was also known for his Neoplatonic outlook, which essentially followed the philosophy of Proclus, although doubt is now cast on his authorship of the *De Daemonibus*, a judgement which Allatios anticipated.[111]

This acceptance of Neoplatonism and the concomitant desire to present different systems as compatible also arises out of western intellectual developments. During the Renaissance, the Neoplatonic *Hermetic Corpus* was believed to be extremely ancient and to provide information which had existed at the time of Moses or even before the Fall of Adam, but had since been lost. It was considered to contain a divine revelation which underpinned Christianity and united it with pagan philosophy.[112] Even after Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), one of the greatest French classical scholars, revealed in the sixteenth century that the *Hermetic Corpus* was actually a work of the second century A.D., the belief in a perfect knowledge which would be in harmony with all sources continued.[113] This outlook was encouraged by patristic works for, in their attempts to legitimise their use of pagan thought, the Church Fathers had followed Greek writers and posited an ancient, often Old Testament source for much of Greek philosophy.[114]

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[111] José Grosdidier de Matons, 'Psellos et le monde de l'irrationnel', *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), 325–26.
[112] Webster, *Paracelsus*, p. 2.
[113] Ibid., p. 5.
[114] Copenhaver, 'Natural Magic', pp. 268–69.

It is Allatios' world view, influenced by Neoplatonism, which enables him to see a common thread running through all these accounts and allows him to draw together seemingly different outlooks — popular, Christian and pagan — into one overall structure. Allatios' Neoplatonism leads him to take popular beliefs seriously and treat them sympathetically. However, the inclusiveness of Neoplatonism also has its drawbacks. The most serious problem is that this concept of the world undermines the uniqueness of the Christian miracle. As the devout Minim Mersenne argued in his attack on natural magic, if Christian and pagan practices act on the world in the same way, how was one to distinguish the Christian miracles, which were supposedly supernatural events that could not be produced by nature?[115] In what way do the flickering lights dismissing the patriarch and the miracle working icons stand out from the predictions based on pagan magic or the behaviour of *stoicheia*? More importantly still, how could the miracle of the Eucharist be distinguished from mere incantations? If pagan philosophers such as Apollonios of Tyana were able to affect things in the natural world through talismans and incantations which made use of correspondences, how could Christians mark out their miracles as special? If seemingly miraculous events could be produced by human manipulation of nature, Christian miracles could be reduced to ordinary everyday events.[116] This danger was manifest in the conclusions of the sixteenth-century magus, Cornelius Agrippa. He regarded Christian ceremonies and prayer in the same light as pagan ones.[117] Both were involved in the same kind of activity: the manipulation of correspondences through words and rituals. These difficulties perhaps shed light on the concern of the Post-Tridentine Church to verify miracles by ruling out natural causes altogether. They also explain the desire of Mersenne and Descartes to protect the uniqueness of divine action by separating nature and religion and removing the all-pervasive divine presence from nature. However, to go too far in the other direction and reject the animated world altogether could also undermine the basis for Christian miracles, and deny the efficacy of the appeal to saints advocated by

[115] Brian P. Copenhaver, 'The Occultist Tradition and its Critics' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1998), vol. 1, p. 467; Ashworth, 'Catholicism', p. 138.
[116] Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 195; 210.
[117] Brooke, *Science*, p. 75.

the church.[118] The Jesuits made use of this conception, and even adhered to it themselves, when they replaced popular magic, amulets and rituals with ecclesiastical equivalents.[119] Moreover, some men of science, like van Helmont, the devout Belgian chemist and contemporary of Allatios, sought to retain the continuing presence of God in everyday life, by arguing that the physical world could only be known through the spiritual union of man and nature.[120]

These tensions remain in Allatios' work, as in the wider context of seventeenth-century intellectual life and highlight the problematic aspects of his text. He was dealing with issues of which the church did not approve. Perhaps this accounts for the obscuring of the astrological connection of the *stoicheion* and his preference for leaving his Neoplatonic schema implicit. However, he is always careful to distinguish Christian practices as more pious, and to stress that it is God who is the cause of the event. Even in incidents which did not have a specifically Christian context, it was still acknowledged that God could work through his creation, and provide his people with signs to interpret. This way of studying nature, looking through it to God, was a traditional medieval Christian way of viewing the world but it continued into the seventeenth century. The treatise of Nicholaus Steno in 1675 described the world in terms of a collection of signs and symbols, the contemplation of which drew the mind to God. Natural processes could still be understood as conveying God's instructions to mankind.[121] There is a much greater problem with the compatibility of the actions of Apollonios of Tyana in the creation of talismans. How could a pagan philosopher produce such marvels without access to a Christian God? Allatios provides no clue to his solution to this problem. It is perhaps significant that the only actions he specifically approves of in this sphere are Christian ones and that he obscures the Neoplatonic system that ties Christian and pagan processes together.

If Neoplatonism caused theological problems, it also caused difficulties for investigating the natural world. Firstly, if everything rests on the same principle, it makes it difficult to distinguish superstition from

[118] Ibid., p. 70.
[119] Johnson, 'Blood', 198–201.
[120] Walter Pagel, *Joan Baptista van Helmont: Reformer of Science and Medicine* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 1.
[121] Ashworth, 'Catholicism', p. 145.

learned Neoplatonic precepts. Nevertheless, Allatios is not obliged to embrace every example that he provides just because he accepts the world view which underpins the acts. Like all Neoplatonists, he uses other criteria to separate out what he accepts and what he rejects. In spite of his Neoplatonic outlook, Psellos rejects the talismans of Iulianus Chaldeus and Apuleius Aser: "It clearly seems to me that what is disseminated by these men is nothing but fables and fiction."[122] Their writings do not correspond to his own experience of the world. Neoplatonism does not oblige Psellos or Allatios to accept either the popular beliefs or the learned Neoplatonic ones. While retaining the underlying 'magical' view of an enchanted universe, Allatios can still reject many of the popular practices as 'superstition'.

William Ashworth has also argued that when everything in nature points to a higher truth, the most important aspects of natural observation remain the discovery of the hidden message from God and therefore less attention is paid to whether the description of the event is true or false.[123] Thus when people saw consecrated bread that had decayed, what was most important was the message that God was sending through this event, rather than what natural processes had caused the decay. However, Allatios' understanding of the relationship between the world and God required him not only to look through nature, but at it. As he points out in his discussion of the *stoicheion*, if spirits disguised as natural creatures have the ability to transmit such messages, it is important to pay attention to natural phenomena.[124] This emphasis is also clear elsewhere in the *De opinationibus*. On Allatios' journey from Chios to Messina in around 1615 his ship was struck by a storm.[125] He noticed the navigator murmuring and making signs. When asked the reason for his actions the navigator answered that he weakened the force of the deadly wave with prayers and the sign of the cross. Allatios then inquired how he knew "the deadly waves amongst so many attacking <the ship>".[126] The man replied that the ship would never sink except from the impact of the dangerous ninth wave. Allatios tested this hypothesis:

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[122] Allatios, *De opin.* XXVIII, p. 178.
[123] Ashworth, 'Catholicism', p. 157.
[124] Allatios, *De opin.* XXI, p. 163.
[125] This perhaps refers to Allatios' return to Rome with Bishop Massone of Chios to face the Congregation for Regulars. See chapter 3 p. 57 above.
[126] Allatios, *De opin.* XXVI, p. 175.

> It was truly amazing. He counted nine and with that wave, just as with a powerful and dangerous machine, the ship rocked so that it clearly threatened destruction . . . and I always experienced the saying of the old man to be true, for the ship was always at risk from the inauspicious ninth wave.[127]

Allatios does not only verify the man's experience of nature, but also the efficacy of his remedy, for "making the sign of the cross, he seemed to soften the blow".[128] The practice of the old sailor meets both the criteria of Christian piety, as well as the observation of nature. For Allatios to accept popular beliefs they not only had to be compatible with his Christianity, they had to be demonstrated as true through experience and observation of the world.[129]

Allatios' account of healing should be placed in the context of Neoplatonic understandings of the world. His perception of disease draws together religion and nature, breaking the separation between natural and supernatural cause and effect. The relationships suggested in the word '*stoicheion*' provide a wider model for interaction between mankind and the world, a model in which the distinction between natural and supernatural causes is blurred.[130] If worldly things are linked by chains of correspondences to the divine power which infuses them with life, it is difficult to divorce divine from natural causality. Unlike other scientists, Allatios does not use his investigation into the secrets of nature, popular beliefs and healing in order to disprove miracles or the authority of Christianity. His own miraculous healing experience reveals the importance he places on the encounter with the miraculous in everyday life. He wished to emphasise the power of religious rites and rituals to manipulate the world. The miraculous and the appeal to God were part of the everyday experience, both for Allatios and for the Orthodox faithful. Like other more elevated chemists and physicists, Allatios' investigation does not hold human reason to be paramount.[131] The observation

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] See Allatios' discussion of the approach of Zacchias and Psellos to the *gello* in chapter 3 above, pp. 78–79.

[130] See for example Allatios' discussion of natural causes in *De opin.* XX, p. 162.

[131] Compare Allatios' approach to that of the devout Catholic chemist van Helmont who combined scepticism with regard to human reason with an emphasis on empiricism as a way to discover the truth. Walter Pagel, 'The Religious and Philosophical

of nature involves an interpretation of God's continuing revelation. For Zacchias, on the other hand, the line between natural and supernatural was far more clearly drawn. Although miracles occurred, they were rare, special events, distinct from both everyday experience and nature itself. Rather than necessitating a rejection of the miraculous, Allatios' Neoplatonic framework allows him to tie miraculous events to his observations of the working of the world. He stresses throughout the text that he uses the criteria of his experience of the world to accept or reject events. In the final section of the work, the miraculous is placed in the context of a world view where religious healing and rites are included in the same understanding of causality as more prosaic actions. Instead of undermining the miraculous, for Allatios the ideology which underpins them both verifies the daily interaction of God in the world: if the Neoplatonic manipulation is accepted, then miracles must be accepted too. Thus he stressed the efficacy of religious action to Zacchias who was sceptical of its veracity, and showed that nature could be acted upon by religious as well as physical means.

Aspects of van Helmont's Science and Medicine' in *Religion and Neoplatonism in Renaissance Medicine* (London, 1985) no. III, p. 13. He also sought to retain the presence of God in the world by tying miracles to the workings of nature. Brooke, *Science*, pp. 72–73.

CONCLUSION

The *De opinationibus* contains a wealth of material relating to matters which are not easily accessible to scholars of Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire. It includes a valuable collection of Byzantine sources, and Allatios' personal experiences and the oral accounts he relates from his contemporaries enrich the excerpts from written works. On first reading, the text appears deceptively straightforward, yet Allatios' perspective influences not only his commentary on the practices, but also his selection, arrangement and even translation of his material. Therefore it is essential to take his approach into account even when reading his text purely for the source material it contains. However, Allatios' underlying purpose is difficult to establish, and it is not easy to resolve his seemingly contradictory positions on popular beliefs. For the historian he is a mediator, but what does he mediate between? At certain points in the text he pours scorn on popular religion, at others he accepts the beliefs he describes. Sometimes his interpretation is informed by his Catholicism, at others his perspective seems close to the popular. If his text is a meeting place for different views, how can these views be defined? To answer these questions an understanding is required not only of the Orthodox and Catholic positions on theological points, but also of the interaction of both ecclesiastical churches with Orthodox popular beliefs and practices. Where do approaches of popular and official Orthodoxy differ and where do they overlap? How do they differ from the official Catholic approach? Such considerations will indicate whether Allatios' own outlook conforms to any of these three approaches, or whether he creates his own synthesis out of his different religious and intellectual influences.

The Focus of the De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus

A detailed analysis of the text has revealed that the *De opinationibus* is not a general exposition of Orthodox popular beliefs but is weighted towards Allatios' interest in the pathology of disease and the workings of the natural world. For this reason he ignores all the customs

surrounding marriage, which is one of the richest areas for popular beliefs and practices within Orthodoxy, as revealed by near contemporary reports of travellers. In the first half of the text, Allatios is concerned with beliefs and practices related to the medical sphere: the *gello* is connected to childhood sickness, the *babutzikarios* is merely a hallucination, *ephialtes* is a nightmare, and the *kallikantzaros* is a condition which afflicts those born at Christmas. Even the *vrykolakas* is connected with plague and the spread of disease. Allatios also devotes attention to the healing of disease through religious practices, such as anointing with holy oil and water, and less acceptable practices: talismans, amulets, popular exorcisms, and the prayers of the wandering monks. Thus he focuses on the spiritual causes and cures for disease in the Orthodox world.

Allatios distinguishes between different types of exotika. Some, he argues, were clearly sickness that afflicted those in bed, that is, *ephialtes* and *babutzikarios*. Others were encountered outdoors and associated with particular places: the *kallikantzaroi* with distant wooded places, the *vrykolakas* with dank ditches and graves. In this they were like the *nereides*, which were spirits of damp places, and the *stoicheion*, which in Allatios' time was a household or well-dwelling spirit. This categorisation of the *nereides* as spirits of place eases Allatios' transition into the second part of the work, where, as we have seen, he focuses at length on the *stoicheion* as an essential element in the Neoplatonic framework through which he perceived the workings of the world. Moreover, the two halves of the *De opinationibus* are not totally separate. The practice of healing with holy water is explained in terms of the ability of words and deeds to manipulate nature, and Allatios refers the reader back to his earlier discussions on spiritual healing. Allatios' Neoplatonism therefore ties the text together as a whole, and is used to explain popular beliefs and practices, including popular unction.

Allatios' Approach to Popular Religion

In the course of his discussion of popular beliefs, Allatios frequently categorises popular beliefs, or '*opinationes*', as 'foolish' or 'mad', or even 'laughable'. Yet he does not view the beliefs as diabolically inspired, nor does he see them as a threat to Christianity. Rather, he follows the practice, common in Orthodoxy and increasingly so

in Italy, of viewing the beliefs merely as signs of ignorance. Allatios is amused by the beliefs he rejects, these 'trifles' as he calls them, but he does not reject all popular practices, reserving great praise for those that are 'more pious'. Consequently he does not categorise popular religion in its entirety as foolish, mad or even pagan. The Orthodox church remained worthy of miracles and these could occur through popular as well as official practice. In fact, Allatios' enthusiasm for the miraculous, which is exemplified in his *De consensione* as well as the *De opinationibus*, goes beyond what would be expected of a medical man and an intellectual.[1] Moreover, his desire to do justice to people's experience of the world, which they expressed through their beliefs, means that he even describes practices which he rejected and in certain instances he accepts practices which can not be fitted into the category of 'more pious' popular beliefs. Therefore his personal experience of some of the beliefs he describes and his more general interest in Orthodox popular religion make the text an extremely valuable source.

It was Allatios' underlying interest in Neoplatonism and ecumenism that supported his own experiences and made his approach to popular religion particularly sympathetic. His first hand knowledge of Orthodoxy obviously had an impact on his outlook. The time spent on Chios as an adult gave him the opportunity to witness the efficacy or otherwise of certain practices, and so provided him with an empirical basis for his account. The accuracy with which the *stoicheion* predicted his arrival and departure in Chios played a role in his acceptance of it. Again, with the *vrykolakas*, he did not deny the existence of undissolved bodies in graves as he had seen one himself. His experiences were also important for his assessment of Orthodoxy as a whole. His ecumenical stance itself may have originated in the experience of intercommunion on Chios as a child, and his own Greek identity and Orthodox background undoubtedly played a part in his balanced and sympathetic account of Greek beliefs. As an adult his experiences encouraged him to treat both official and popular Orthodox practices leniently, stressing the similarities to, rather than the differences from, the Catholic faith.

In his discussion of popular beliefs, Allatios was careful not to suggest that the Greeks were peculiarly superstitious. Nor did he view

[1] Allatios, *De Consens.*, 3.9 cols. 1062–90.

popular practices as an indication of the sad state of the faith of the adherents, or even of their paganism, as many missionaries had done. He avoided talking about practices, such as those that appear in demonological texts, which would have been totally unacceptable in a Catholic context. Instead he engaged in a range of strategies to draw Orthodoxy closer to his own Catholic position. In some cases Orthodox popular beliefs emphasised the power of Orthodox sacraments or sacramentals. Orthodox baptism, like its Catholic counterpart, was powerful and could be employed to combat evil spirits. For popular unction, which directly corresponded to practices in the West, he reserved the greatest praise of all. It revealed the true piety of the Greeks, and he validated the practice with his own miraculous healing experience. In other cases, popular beliefs were used to show the underlying similarities on points where there were doctrinal differences between East and West, as when he draws a connection between the *tympaniaios* and purgatory. Even witchcraft, a problem of great import in the West, was drawn into the discussion; after all, the Catholic laity had their popular beliefs too.

One method Allatios used to stress the similarities between Orthodoxy and Catholicism was to focus on the historical relationship between the two churches. This revealed not only the antiquity of the Orthodox practices, but also their currency in the period before the schism. Obviously, Allatios' method relied heavily on his antiquarian research, as it depended on tracing present customs back into the distant past through historical documents. In the *De opinationibus* the method was particularly important in the case of healing traditions, for it was on his discussion of these that his demonstration of the piety of the Greeks rested. Allatios drew attention to the fact that the practice was represented in the shared past of the churches, in the early saints' lives, and in the Catholic past and present, as well as in the Orthodox tradition.

The role of ecumenism, his antiquarianism, and his historical method in revealing the underlying similarities of the churches stands out even more clearly when placed in the context of the other letters with which the *De opinationibus* was published: *De templis Graecorum recentioribus*, containing two letters written to Jean Morin, and *De narthece ecclesiae veteris*, to Gaspares de Simeonibus.[2] None of these

[2] For a translation and commentary on these two letters to Morin see Allatios, *Newer Temples*.

deals with similar subject matter to the *De opinationibus* as they are concerned with the architecture of Greek churches, but all four letters are linked by the ecumenical perspective that runs through them. In each one Allatios attempted to explain the customs and traditions of the Greeks to a western audience. In the first letter, Allatios answered Morin's queries concerning the structure of the Greek churches. The letters contained in the *De templis* are only two of many written to Morin on the subject of the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. Their extensive correspondence covers a wide range of subjects, stretching from the rituals and terminology of the Orthodox liturgy to the architecture of the buildings. Even in the works with an architectural focus, such as the *De templis*, Allatios' ecumenical perspective was influential on his description of the churches. He was aware that the differences between East and West were reflected in the developments of the external features of the two churches as well as in their dogma and doctrine. Allatios argued that the reason for the discrepancies between the two churches in these as in other matters lay in their historical development. For a fruitful dialogue to occur between the two churches, it was essential that the West understood the terminology of these externals and their process of development. As in the *De opinationibus*, Allatios approached the subject primarily through texts, rather than through his own experience, and used his antiquarian expertise to select and elaborate on passages from earlier Byzantine writers. In this way, he guided Morin through the plan of the church, moving from the outside towards the centre, dealing with the unfamiliar parts of the eastern church and the various objects used in worship, from bells to liturgical vessels.

The second letter written to Gaspares de Simeonis is entirely devoted to an examination of a single architectural question, that of the narthex. It might seem peculiar to pay so much attention to this matter but, once more, it concerns the two issues central to Allatios' works on the Orthodox church: the differences between East and West and the historical development of the churches. Unlike Orthodox churches, western churches did not have a narthex and writers were puzzled as to its purpose and relationship to the church proper. The term occurred often in ecclesiastical writing but there was no consensus on its relation to the church: should it be considered as part of the church or outside it? This matter required an explanation so that misconceptions would not arise. Again, Allatios dealt with the

question textually. Thus, in spite of their different subject matter the four letters are bound together by a common method and purpose: to narrow the gap between Orthodoxy and Catholicism and to explain the Greek church to the West using a historical method.

While the *De opinationibus* shares the ecumenical outlook of the other three, it was his Neoplatonic world view that allowed Allatios to extend his sympathy to popular Orthodox practices. It was this outlook which allowed him to accept, albeit in a different form, the *exotika* of popular belief, the *nereides*, the *stoicheion* and the *vrykolakas* and understand them in terms other than the diabolic. At times, his Neoplatonic outlook brought him deceptively close to the popular approach to official Orthodoxy. The Orthodox people were undiscriminating in their use of both practices the church promoted and those it condemned. They saw no contradiction in using ecclesiastical rites such as baptism to ward off demons, together with less acceptable amulets and popular exorcisms, or in using both ecclesiastical exorcism and cremation to destroy the *vrykolakas*. Like the people he was investigating, Allatios did not always make a distinction between popular and official approaches to the beliefs. His Neoplatonism enabled him to treat Orthodox popular and official beliefs within the same framework, for it bound together Christian and pagan, popular and official into a single system. Thus Allatios understood popular religion as functioning within a wider Christian sphere, interacting with the ecclesiastical rites. Indeed, as we have seen, the laity and official church shared a belief in the power of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary and the saints. The church, God's representative on earth, was viewed as a repository of his power; the people turned to it in difficult times and periods of life crisis — birth, sickness, marriage, death — and the church endeavoured to meet their needs. The actions and strategies of the people might be foolish or unacceptable to Allatios but they did not negate the underlying Christianity of those who used them. After all, although he categorised much of the content of his text in terms of 'the beliefs of the common people', Allatios claimed to investigate the beliefs of the 'Greeks' as a whole. He divided up the sphere of religious experience according to his own acceptance or rejection of beliefs but made no strict separation between the approaches of the Orthodox hierarchy and the Orthodox faithful. It was this approach that led Allatios to chastise the church for not bringing forward baptism to protect against the *gello*, when in fact the Orthodox authorities denied the *gello's* exist-

ence and wished to extirpate the popular belief. Again, in his treatment of unction, he placed the practices which occurred within an ecclesiastical context, such as the anointing after particular services, on the same level as popular practices involving anointing with herbs. Moreover, in his discussion of the *vrykolakas*, Allatios did exactly what the church had been trying to prevent. He treated the *vrykolakas* and the *tympaniaios* as one creature, blurring the distinction between the revenant of popular belief and the ecclesiastical revenant created through excommunication.

Allatios' ecumenism and in particular his Neoplatonism might occasionally bring him close to the popular perspective but it is essential to remember that the two principal approaches which moulded his thought arose from his western intellectual background. His understanding of the *stoicheion* as a spirit of place and an element of a larger Neoplatonic framework, came not from Orthodox popular religion but from his western learning and antiquarian research. The belief was not current in the Byzantine or Ottoman East, but was well known in the West. Allatios' western perspective had other consequences for his interpretation of popular religion. One reason why he failed to see the connection between the *nereides* and *gelloudes* in the context of marriage was because he viewed them in terms of western categories: *nereides* were a type of spirit of place, the *gelloudes* a kind of witch. Admittedly, Allatios' insistence on the one-to-one relationship between the name of an object and the object itself, which was a characteristic of western Renaissance thought, also had an impact on his categorisation. Thus caterpillars were called "'*campae*' because they curl themselves into an arc" from the verb 'κάμπτω', 'curl'.[3] For Allatios the name '*vrykolakas*' was derived from the foul smelling ditch, 'Βοῦρκα', and the dank cave 'Λάκκος' which were connected to the spread of disease.[4] While the overlapping of names and characteristics was a feature of popular beliefs, for Allatios one name was usually connected to one particular kind of demon.[5] However, it was Allatios' ecumenism and Neoplatonism that were the strongest influences on his arrangement and interpretation of the material. So, despite the strong emphasis on the name-object relationship throughout his text, when Allatios' argument required him to

[3] Allatios, *De opin.* XXIX, p. 176.
[4] Ibid., XII, p. 142.
[5] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 163.

view two practices with different names as one, he did so. The *vrykolakas* and *tympaniaios* were tied together in order to serve Allatios' identification of the Greek revenant as a form of purgatory. The *gello* was identified with the *strigla* in order to associate her with the western witch. Allatos' interpretation of the material was therefore affected above all by the very perspectives that made him sympathetic to it in the first place: Neoplatonism and ecumenism.

Allatios' western learning even encouraged him to 'rationalise' his own childhood experiences, bringing his early encounters with popular religion into line with his later thinking. His miraculous healing experience, which mirrors that of Emperor Michael IX and plays such an important role in demonstrating the piety of the Greeks, may also not be quite what it seems. Following Allatios' miraculous cure, a line of tall, garlanded women dressed in white processed through his room and plucked leaves from the myrtle branch with which the miraculous cure was effected. These figures might be identified with the holy virgins, who were associated with the Virgin Mary or Panagia.[6] On the other hand they might correspond to the *nereides* who also appear in this way, and could, on occasion cure sickness.[7] Therefore while Allatios' approach is deceptively close to the popular at times, his underlying intellectual concerns must not be forgotten.

The above outline suggests that Allatios' Neoplatonism was far more important than his ecumenism for his approach to popular religion, but this was not the case. As we have seen, the *De opinationibus* falls into the genre of 'secrets of nature', in which popular practices are investigated in order to reveal the hidden secrets unknown to the 'wisest of men'. Allatios' research into 'the beliefs of the Greeks today' within this Neoplatonic framework does not only show the unified nature of popular and official religion, but also the underlying unity of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The 'wisdom' of popular practices reveals that beneath the doctrinal disputes, Orthodoxy and Catholicism exist in harmony: the *vrykolakas* demonstrates that the Orthodox believed in purgatory, albeit in a different form; the Orthodox like the Catholics use holy water for healing; the Orthodox faithful, like the Catholic laity believe in witches, which can be

[6] Ibid., p. 156 on the convergence between the *nereides* and the Panagia.
[7] Stewart, 'Nymphomania', p. 241.

warded off by the power inherent in baptism. Through Neoplatonism, Allatios' investigation into popular beliefs is harnessed to his ecumenical project.

Allatios and the Relationship between Popular and Official Orthodoxy

The *De opinationibus* is an extremely important source for popular Orthodoxy in the Byzantine and early modern periods but Allatios' interpretations remain problematic and must be treated with care. His concern lies in the relationship between East and West and he tells us little about the tensions between popular and official Orthodoxy. He assumes a uniform experience of religion within Orthodoxy but this approach does not provide a complete picture of the varieties of religious experience and the relationship between official and popular religion. For the people there may have been little difference between lay and ecclesiastical remedies but for the Orthodox hierarchy there certainly was, and popular and official approaches to demons and the *exotika* differed in important ways. The church rejected the existence of the *exotika*. When they did appear in ecclesiastical sources, they were presented as illusions of the devil and although they were allowed no real existence in themselves, they were viewed as an emanation of evil. In popular thought the situation was less clear-cut. All the *exotika* were powerful, but they could sometimes be beneficent. The *stoicheia* brought good fortune to the household as long as they were treated with consideration. The *nereides* made their lovers rich and gave them gifts. They might steal children but they did not harm them. Even creatures as frightening as the *vrykolakas* could be perceived in positive terms. For the anthropologist Charles Stewart, in modern Greek popular perception the *exotika* "stand halfway between the abstract theological notion of evil represented by the Devil and the world of men".[8] Similarly, early modern popular beliefs cannot be forced into the absolute definitions of good or evil laid down by the official church.

Just as popular practices blurred the line between good and evil in their formulation of the *exotika*, they also transcended the categories laid down by the church regarding human and spiritual natures. For

[8] Stewart, *Exotika*, 46.

the official church, human and demonic natures were not interchangeable, nor could a creature be both human and demonic at the same time. However, in Orthodox popular beliefs the *gello* was both a woman and a demon; the *vrykolakas* a demon and a dead person, not merely a demon and a corpse. Stewart has suggested that modern Greek *exotika* are viewed as demons which have become like humans but the above analysis of the early modern material suggests that the movement is in the other direction too.[9] The *exotika* can be humans who have become like demons. *Exotika* therefore shared both human and spiritual characteristics in a way that contradicted Orthodox theology. More seriously still, the lay conception of the *exotika* contravened church teaching on dualism. In popular beliefs the power of the devil was not so strictly limited as in official teaching. Demons could act independently from God, and defy the command of his representatives on earth. In the case of the *vrykolakas*, the demon could stubbornly resist the ecclesiastical command to depart.

Even in its approach to official beliefs, the popular perspective could differ from the ecclesiastical one. The ordinary people often understood ecclesiastical rituals in a different way from the higher clergy, assimilating them into the stock of strategies with which they approached the world and understanding them in the same way as popular practices. In official theology, ecclesiastical actions were powerful because they ultimately relied on the omnipotence of God. In contrast for the people holy water, ecclesiastical words, holy books, prayers and rites, and the persons of clergy were all acknowledged to be powerful in themselves. Excommunication, like cursing, was powerful even if it was unjustified because of the power inherent in the words. However, there was no strict division between the attitude of the laity and that of individual clerics on these matters. Some clergy were prepared to believe in and burn the *vrykolakas*; some even believed in the *gello*. Nevertheless, the central church legislated against these beliefs and practices and the approach of the church with respect to the *exotika* was in opposition to the popular viewpoint. To a certain extent at least, the ecclesiastical division of religious experience into 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' practices, which Stewart identifies in the modern period, also existed in early modern times.[10]

[9] Stewart, *Demons*, p. 153.
[10] Ibid., p. 248.

Despite these differences in perspective, the church seems to have taken little action against the practices it outlawed. The appearance of the *exotika* in both popular and ecclesiastical art from the period is an indication of the freedom with which people could express themselves, as well as the current nature of the beliefs.[11] In the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *nomokanones* from Meteora collected by Nikolaos Vees, there are few prescriptions against the *gello* and even fewer against other *exotika*.[12] Admittedly, there are also a number of rulings against magic, a sin which incurred the penalty of excommunication, but on the whole the church in the early modern period seems to have maintained a relatively light touch.[13] This was partly because of the situation that the church authorities found themselves. Their increased authority over the activities of the Orthodox meant that they were occupied primarily with the regulation of actions more than beliefs and the low level of education of many of the priests made it impossible for the ecclesiastical hierarchy to carry out any kind of systematic reform.

On the other hand, the church was able to overlook popular beliefs even though it opposed them because they did not undermine the official church. Many popular practices acknowledged the power of the church to protect against the demons. The sacrament of baptism, exorcism and the use of holy oil all played an important role within the popular practices. Lay practices upheld the power of the church and underlined the importance of participating in ecclesiastical rites.[14] In turn, the important role played by official rites in popular religion reveals the enormous capacity of the church in the eyes of the laity for offering succour in difficult times. Sometimes the needs of the laity were met purely because of the broad assumption of power of the church over all demonic activity. Thus baptism was effective against the *gello* because of its power over all demons, a claim made explicitly in the baptismal exorcisms. But the church also played an active role in providing for the needs of the faithful,

[11] See the images produced in Provatakis, *Ὁ Διάβολος* and fig. 3 above and also the examples of popular art in the Benaki Museum in Angelos Delivorrias, *A Guide to the Benaki Museum* (Athens, 2000), esp. pp. 90; 118.

[12] Nikolaos Vees, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα των Μετεώρων*, 3 vols. (Athens, 1967). See for example vol. 2, pp. 160; 203; 276. Compare these to the canons listed against the *vrykolakas*, some of which are listed in n. 14 below.

[13] Gerouki, *Les Excomunications*, pp. 253–68.

[14] See Stewart's comparable findings for modern Greece in *Demons*, p. 248.

allowing access to holy oil and prayers for healing purposes in addition to the more elaborate healing rituals of the sacrament.

It is possible that Allatios tells us little about the tensions between the church and the laity because such tensions were rarely apparent in the daily life of the community. However, in areas where tension did arise, for example between the popular and official interpretations of the undecomposed body, Allatios glosses over it. The profusion of canons against the popular beliefs and practices surrounding the popular revenant indicate the level of ecclesiastical unease.[15] Unlike the other popular beliefs, the *vrykolakas* challenged the official church. Its existence contradicted the ecclesiastical claim that it alone could bind and loose bodies as well as souls. Nevertheless, even here the church acted both to meet lay needs and to provide an alternative solution to the depredations of the *vrykolakas*. It adapted the popular revenant to fit into its own stricter categories, explaining the creation of the *vrykolakas* as a result of the impiety of those deceived by a diabolic illusion. This explanation brought the *vrykolakas* within the ecclesiastical sphere of jurisdiction and allowed the church to offer the more acceptable remedy of exorcism to destroy the body. It is important to note too that the people who were deceived by the illusion were described as 'poor' or 'impure in faith' rather than 'faithless'. The church, like the laity, understood these beliefs as occurring within a Christian framework. With the *vrykolakas* more than with the other *exotika*, we see the interaction of the church and laity. The sources from which Allatios quotes in the *De opinationibus* reveal the ability of the church to absorb and adapt popular practices, fitting them into the ecclesiastical framework, a process which then allowed the clergy to deal with lay fears surrounding the *exotika*. Similarly, the accounts show how the laity absorbed and adapted the ecclesiastical suggestions into their own body of remedies for the *vrykolakas*. Official and popular beliefs did not coincide but they did interact and overlap.

The *vrykolakas* appeared in sources at a particular time when the church needed to distinguish the lay revenant clearly from the *tympaniaios*, the symbol of its own ecclesiastical and civil power. However, the increasing numbers of accounts of the *vrykolakas* along with the

[15] See chapter 8 above p. 226 and Vees, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα*, vol. 1, pp. 26; 73; 140; 157; vol. 2, pp. 106; 184; 195; 251; 260; 264; 298.

tympaniaios indicates more than just ecclesiastical concern. The expanding jurisdiction of the church meant that excommunication, and with it the revenant, played a much greater role in the lives of ordinary people, and it was not always easy to distinguish between the two creatures. Popular beliefs therefore were not static and were affected by the wider social environment. The expanding role of the revenant in early modern popular religion was a direct result of the position of the church under the Ottomans, where competing ecclesiastical and civil authority increased the need of the Orthodox church to make a strong statement of its power. Its concern was justified, as the people's approach was eclectic. The laity appealed to the legal and religious capacities of the Catholic and Islamic authorities, as well as to the Orthodox, to obtain solutions for everyday problems. For example, the Orthodox laity approached the Catholic clergy for education, medical and religious healing and, more specifically, to obtain advice on how to avoid becoming a *vrykolakas*. Far more work remains to be done on the interactions between Islamic, Orthodox and Catholic beliefs but even from the survey here, which has barely touched on this relationship, it is clear that the kadi and imam could play an important role in the lives of the Orthodox people. The tip of the iceberg is visible in the popular approach to the imam as well as the priest to bless new-born Christian babies, and the appeal to the kadi in civil cases, particularly those involving divorce where Islamic courts were more likely to rule in favour of separation.

In Allatios' interpretation there is no acknowledgement of any change or development in Orthodox practices as a result of the interaction between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam. His historical approach to Orthodoxy was responsible, along with his Neoplatonism and ecumenism, for his sympathetic reporting of popular practice, but it obscures the immediate social context of the practices he describes. His method, which made extensive use of manuscript sources, emphasised continuity, not change and development. Yet it is important to bear in mind that other faiths interacted with popular Orthodoxy in a different way from the Orthodox hierarchy. Official Orthodox texts on popular religion operated within the context of common cultural assumptions, assumptions which were not shared by Allatios or by Catholic commentators. Most obviously, both popular and official Orthodoxy understood the world as one in which spiritual as well as physical activity took place. For the church, God could convey messages to the faithful through manipulating the natural

world; for the laity, the appearance of spirits (*stoicheia*) in the form of animals could indicate their fate, and the world could be manipulated through the performance of particular rituals. Admittedly, certain approaches within Catholicism also retained a belief in an animated universe. However, both parts of the Orthodox tradition also shared underlying concerns relating to the liminal periods surrounding birth, marriage and death. For example popular and official beliefs were both shaped by concerns about the period of pollution following birth, which in turn rested on shared concepts of the development of the child and its growing distinctiveness, humanity, and separation from its mother. The popular belief expressed this fear in terms of the *gello*, concentrating her activity in the period after birth when the mother and child were not considered to be fully separated and therefore were thought to be polluted. The sacrament of baptism focused on the end of this period, marking the separate identity of mother and child, welcoming them into the Christian community.

The beliefs and practices surrounding the *vrykolakas* and the *tympaniaios* also highlight shared assumptions in popular and official culture regarding the meaning of a corpse which had failed to follow the proper processes of decay, as culturally defined. For both church and people the state of bodily decay had implications for the separation of the soul and the disentanglement of the ties between the living and the dead. In popular beliefs, these concerns were intimately linked to human relationships: the *gello* was connected to the jealousy surrounding those who achieved the status of motherhood, the *vrykolakas* to the relationship between the dead and the living, particularly between the deceased and his/her family. The official church expressed the concerns within a cosmological framework, where the Christian community was viewed in terms of its position between God and the devil. Within Orthodoxy, therefore, assumptions were shared but expressed in different ways.

The same assumptions were not made by Catholic commentators on Orthodox popular religion. Allatios' suggestion that baptism should take place earlier does not take account of the concern with pollution expressed in both popular and official accounts of birth. Therefore Allatios' comments and assumptions in the *De opinationibus* cannot be used as a guide to the relationships between official and popular Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, Allatios' remarks about baptism and the *gello* and the way he frames the Orthodox revenants in terms of pur-

gatory reveal his attempt to understand and interact with another tradition. Although Allatios does not allow for change in beliefs and customs, his text is a product of the interactions between popular Orthodoxy and Catholicism during the early modern period, interactions which affected the dynamics between popular and official Orthodoxy and even popular beliefs themselves. These cultural meeting points are also apparent in the accounts of Catholic missionaries. Father Richard, for example, was drawn into the debate over the *vrykolakas* and forced to take a position on the events surrounding the death of the unfortunate Anapliotis because of the appeal of the laity. Coming from a tradition where different ideas about death and the progression of the soul held sway, they were able to offer alternative solutions to the problems of the laity.

Allatios' western focus and scholarly methods were therefore central to his sympathetic approach to popular religion but at the same time affected his interpretation of his material. His interpretation represents neither the popular Orthodox perspective, despite its occasional similarities to this position, nor the official Orthodox view of popular religion. The influence of Allatios' Catholicism is apparent throughout the text but, in spite of his own deeply held Catholicism, his approach to popular religion does not always abide by the official Catholic line. His formulation of popular religion in Neoplatonic terms would have been particularly suspect to a disapproving Rome, as would his sympathetic description of divination. Allatios' encounter with the household *stoicheion* would certainly have been classed as 'superstition' and his experience with the fortune-telling icon would also have been viewed unfavourably. Even the practices of unction, which Allatios so carefully related back to the traditions of the early church, would not have been accepted wholeheartedly given ecclesiastical concern about the misuse of holy objects. The problematic aspects of the *De opinationibus* may explain why it was the only one of the four letters with which it was published not to receive a second edition in Rome, the centre of Catholicism itself.

Allatios' approach therefore is not representative of popular or official Orthodoxy or official Catholicism but this does not mean he had no information on or understanding of Orthodox popular beliefs. His own Orthodox childhood and continuing correspondence with family and friends in Chios kept him in touch with Orthodox opinion. Nor does it mean that his Catholicism had no influence on his

perspective. He was clearly aware of the Catholic and Orthodox positions on dogma and doctrine, and his desire to stress the similarities between the two churches meant that his ecumenical approach played a role even in his investigation into the "beliefs of the common people". However, his Catholicism and his Orthodox experiences were blended with other intellectual perspectives, perspectives which at the time were beginning to be viewed in some quarters as incompatible with Catholicism. Allatios' approach to popular beliefs is a testament to his ability to blend and integrate different ideas into a coherent whole.

The De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus *and Wider Scholarship*

Although this book has concentrated on the contribution of the *De opinationibus* to the study of Orthodox popular religion, Allatios' text also offers other avenues of research. Questions which arise from a study of the letter, are not only important for an examination of popular religion but also for an understanding of the broader interactions between the Catholic and Orthodox churches in the early modern period. Moreover, if the focus is shifted from the content of the text to the author, it can be useful for an investigation into the environment of seventeenth-century intellectual life in Rome and the changing relationship between the educated elite and popular religion in the West. The *De opinationibus* provides an indication of the range of intellectual opinions which existed in Rome during the period of Catholic renewal. The repressive nature of the later papacy of Urban VIII has often been noted, yet, despite Allatios' Neoplatonic sympathies, despite his attempts to protect the Orthodox church, and despite his personal friction with Urban, he managed to compose the *De opinationibus* while remaining at the centre of the church.

Although its Greek theme is unique, the *De opinationibus* was not the only work on popular beliefs and practices to be written in the mid-seventeenth century. A detailed comparison with other such texts would highlight the individual and original aspects of Allatios' interpretation. Even a brief investigation reveals that he was out of step with some of his contemporaries. Allatios' denigration of popular beliefs and practices hid a deeper involvement in and sympathy with popular religion. In this he differed from his contemporaries, Thomas

Browne and Pierre Bayle.[16] Thomas Browne's *Pseudoxia Epidemica* or *Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*, published the year after the *De opinationibus*, did not adopt the same approach to popular religion. Where Allatios insisted on respect for popular experience, even when he disagreed with the popular interpretation, Browne emphasised the popular inability to "wield the intellectual arms of reason", which condemned the people to "live and die in their absurdities; passing their days in perverted apprehensions and conceptions of the World, derogatory unto God, and the wisdom of the Creation."[17] The difference between the two approaches is immediately clear. In his respect for popular experience, and in his Neoplatonic methodology Allatios stands far closer to his sixteenth-century predecessors, such as the natural magician Della Porta. However, he is set apart from these too by his own deep and continuing personal involvement in the tradition that he described.

For Allatios the unbroken Orthodox tradition was alive and well in his own time but he was perhaps one of the last to view it in this way. The modern division of Greek history into classical, Byzantine and Ottoman periods did not exist at the beginning of the seventeenth century; by the turn of the eighteenth, the notion of a 'Byzantine history', separated from the classical and contemporary periods had begun to form. The Paris Corpus, the first collection of medieval Greek works, went into publication in 1648 and began to define the subject matter of the discipline.[18] By 1680, a conception of the eastern empire as a distinct historical entity was starting to evolve, as revealed by the title of Du Cange's work, the *Historia Byzantina.* The early modern commentaries on the sources emphasised both the break with the Roman Empire when the capital moved to Constantinople in 324 and the passing of the medieval Empire with the coming of the Ottoman Turks. The gradual isolation of Byzantium as a separate historical phenomenon focused attention upon the medieval empire but, by breaking the links with both ancient Greece and

[16] On Bayle see for example Ruth Whelan, *The Anatomy of Superstition: a Study of the Historical Theory and Practice of Pierre Bayle* (Oxford, 1989).

[17] Thomas Browne, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, vol. 2, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica Books I–VII* (London, 1928), p. 26.

[18] Jean-Michel Spieser, 'Du Cange and Byzantium' in Robin Cormack and Elizabeth Jeffreys (eds.), *Through the Looking Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 199–210.

Rome and the present occupants of the Ottoman Empire, made it easier to disregard the medieval past of the East. Concomitantly, travellers and authors began to focus more on the classical past of the Greeks, connecting the ancient period directly to their own day, minimising the contribution of the 'Byzantine' period.

Allatios' focus on beliefs, customs and, in the *De Ecclesiae*, Christian doctrine and dogma, does not follow this pattern. His conception of the Greeks of 'his own day' stretches back from the early modern period to the Apostolic age, encompassing the whole Christian period, but excluding the classical past. The faith of his Greek contemporaries was directly linked to that of the earliest Christians: a continuous tradition ran through Orthodoxy from the early church to his own time, encompassing, not excluding, the 'Byzantine' period. The Orthodox faith remained worthy of miracles. His own healing experience stood in the same tradition as the miracles of the early church and the miracles of the medieval East. In other areas too, in the 'less admirable' practices which he discussed, the tradition remained equally strong. The texts he draws from the archives represent for him a living reality not a dead tradition and in this Leo Allatios was not merely an early Byzantinist, but a late Byzantine.

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